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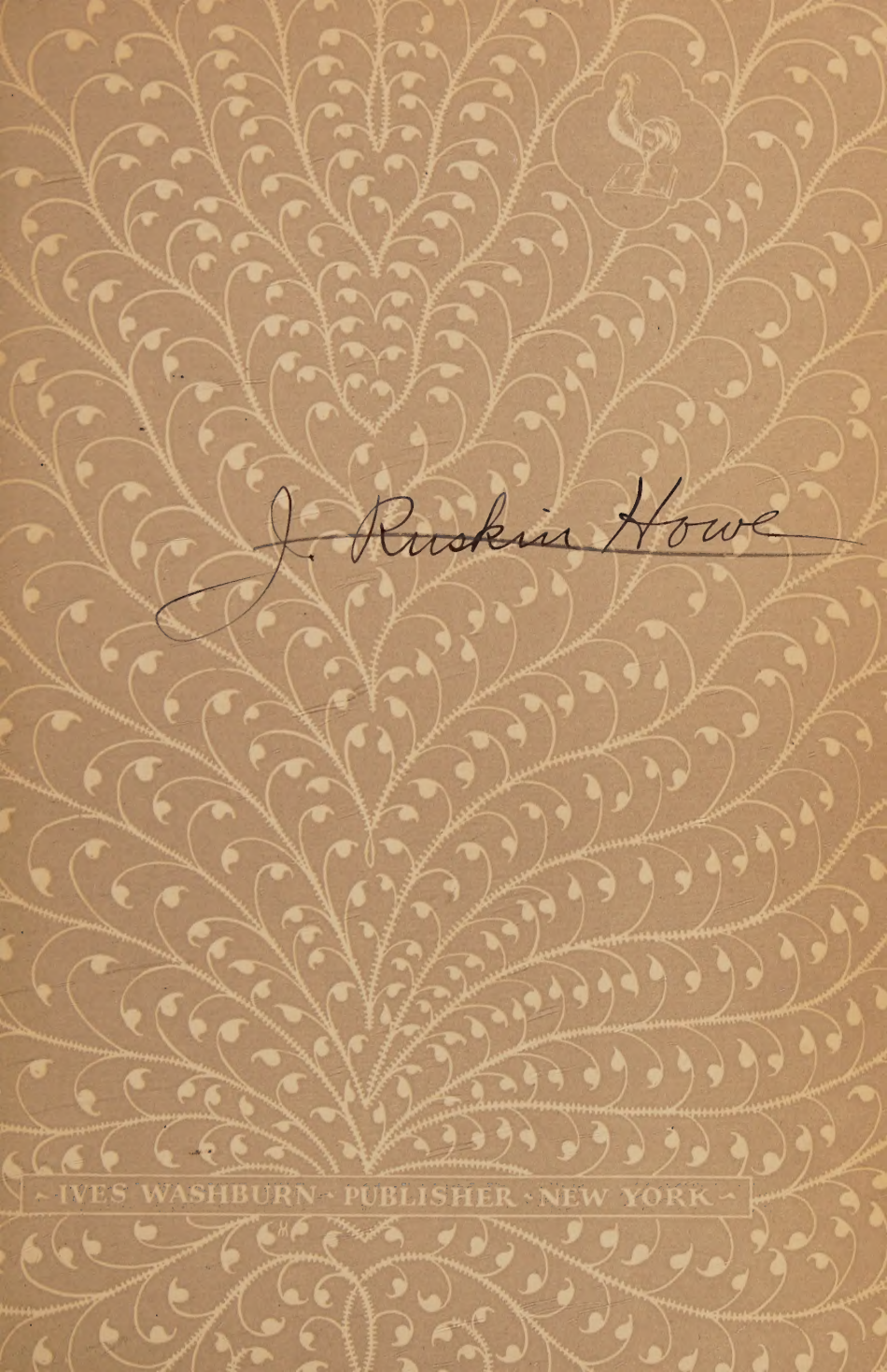

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WHILE PETER SLEEPS

By

E. BOYD BARRETT
AUTHOR OF "THE JESUIT ENIGMA"

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1929

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First Printing, March, 1929
Second Printing, May, 1929

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

INTRODUCTION

IT is characteristic of the devout Catholic of the present day to maintain that all is well with the Church and that she was never less in need of reform. If questioned on the matter, he will point to the highly perfected organisation of the Church, the good repute enjoyed by ecclesiastical dignitaries, and the excellent order that prevails. He will refer derisively to the confusion and disorder that is to be seen in other Christian Churches, and boast of the immense and ever increasing congregations that throng Catholic places of worship, the splendid prosperity of Catholic schools, the notable progress of Catholic missions, the numerical increase of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and he will ask, "Are not such things manifestations of God's good pleasure with the fold of Peter?"

As against this view of the devout Catholic there stands the opinion of Catholics whom one meets here and there, both lay and clerical, men of critical temper perhaps, but not lacking in sincerity, who hold that all is not well with the Church, and that *actually she is in dire need of reform.* They are willing to admit the existence of external signs of prosperity in the Church—marvellous progress in building; vast societies of Catholic laymen; colleges and schools packed to capacity; a developing political and civic power—

but they see or believe they see the germs of disease at work beneath this splendid exterior. They argue that the stock of the Church is unduly inflated; that her prosperity is deceptive; that the spirit that animates the Church is no longer pure but an alloy; and that it would be wise for the Church to institute immediate reform, so as to forestall a disastrous débâcle.

That the Church should be in need of reform from time to time is not to be wondered at. It is largely a human institution and in many respects liable to imperfection and error. The *Council of Trent* was itself an admission not only of the Church's liability to fall into decay, but also of the Church's actual corruption at the time. It is inevitable that laws and practices instituted by the Church for one period, and presumably suitable and beneficial for such a period, should prove unsuitable and sometimes harmful when conditions change. When such befalls, the Church in a reforming spirit must abolish or rescind the laws. In recent times a very important reform was effected appertaining to the "codification" (so-called) of *Canon Law*. Unfortunately the scope of the reform was narrow, and a hundred crying abuses were left untouched. Peter was awake for a moment, but drowsiness overcame him again in a brief span . . . and alas! it is no easy task to arouse from sleep an aged fisherman.

When individuals raise their voices and call for reform, there is resentment in the hearts of those who do not think that reform is needed or who for some reason or other do not desire it. In the sixteenth century, Eras-

mus, More and Colet, to mention but a few names, suffered not a little for their frank appeals for a purging of the Church. Luther, driven to extremes by the hostility he encountered at the hands of reactionaries, was the unhappy instrument of splitting the Church in twain instead of purifying it. Always there are prudent and influential ecclesiastics who advise against change, and above all against raising a cry for reform. "Make your suggestions in secret," they say. "Let no one know what your complaints or criticisms are. The Holy See will consider carefully and indulgently what you have to say. If you raise your voice you will cause scandal. You will give the enemies of the Church a weapon to use against her! You will disedify the faithful! More harm than good will come of it if you insist upon making yourself heard." But as against this astute, and possibly hypocritical advice, one hears the warning voice of history that no long-standing organisation, whether civil or religious, is prepared to listen to the pleading of an individual against its well-established customs and policy. Many voices must be raised in unison, a great outcry must be heard, strong pressure must be brought to bear or else *nothing will be done.*

Of late English Catholics of high repute have begun to write freely about the Church, and they do not feel constrained to employ terms of adulation only. Among American Catholics, on the other hand, the "hush-hush" policy is pursued, and the strategy of covering over the faults of the Church is invariably employed. Priests in great numbers have stories to write about the Church,

and plans to advance for the solution of her troubles, but no priest is suffered to treat of such matters in the public press. Were they to do so they would be instantly penalised . . . and probably excommunicated. Neither may lay Catholics in this country criticise the Church in public, unless they are prepared to forfeit the goodwill of their co-religionists. Nevertheless we find champions of orthodox Catholicism, like Mr. Michael Williams (Editor of the *Commonweal*), affirming that "every fairly intelligent and even partially well-informed Catholic layman knows it to be true that his Church can be helped and has been helped by honest sincere criticism." Be that as it may, criticism of the Church is no longer considered either *honest* or *sincere* if it is in any sense severe . . . if it goes beyond a respectfully worded complaint on the subject of acolytes who serve Mass with holes in their socks.

In a sense there has always been a "reform party" in the Catholic Church, a party in opposition to the ever-victorious majority favoring centralisation, autocracy and conservatism. Unfortunately this party has been poor in every respect, save only in the ability and distinction of its leaders. It has been and is the party whose platform is adorned with the shibboleths, "Culture, Diffusion, Decentralisation." Notable among its recent leaders was Cardinal Mercier. He believed that good was to be found *also* without the Church. He believed in a better understanding among all the Churches, with the reunion of Christendom as a final aim. Ardently he upheld the cause of the natural sciences and modern culture, and although his simple faith yielded

implicit obedience to the Pope, he exercised to the full the autonomy of his own diocese, thereby showing his belief in the decentralisation of the Church's power. Were he in America today, a young Bishop, gifted as he was with a fine adventurous mind, what a leader he would make for the troublous times that be ahead of the American Catholic Church!

In writing outspoken, frank things about the Church to which I belong, I am departing from present-day usage. Usage sanctions criticism, even severe criticism of the Church's behaviour at epochs *in the past* . . . but it demands of Catholic writers that there be conveyed the suggestion that "all is well with the Church today." Last year, Father M. D'Arcy speaking of the Church in the later Middle Ages, wrote. "The Church which had set out to cure human society and inspire it with its ideas exposed itself carelessly to those very diseases which it was its duty to eradicate. . . . Corrupt manners spread into the Papal Court. The Papacy lost prestige." But he did not venture to suggest that the Church had repeated her misadventure. Daring more than the distinguished English Jesuit, and repudiating as hypocrisy the obligation to pretend that "all is well with the Church today," I confess to the conviction that the Church is once more stricken with her old complaint, and that all the world knows it. I for one should as lief admit that my mother (the Church) is foolish and worldly today, in her advanced age, as that she was so in her prime. "It is no new thing," wrote Cardinal Gasquet, in an American journal last year, "that the Church should be in need of reform." Were

his Eminence wholly sincere he would avow that the Church is in such need today and that the "axe should be laid to the root?"

As I write I propose to avail myself freely of my experiences as a Catholic priest and director of souls, save in so far as I am restricted in such a course by the secrecy of confessional communications. If it should fall out that the reward for my effort to speak plainly to a truth-loving generation be a cosy corner among the forbidden books of the *Index* I shall feel no heart-rending solicitude about the loneliness of my volume, for it will find itself among the offspring of Cardinals, Archbishops and eminent Jesuits—strange bed-fellows forsooth, but not always unsociable.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author desires to express his appreciation for the kind permission of the editors of *The Journal of Religion* and *The American Mercury* to reprint in this book material which appeared in recent issues of these magazines.

E. Boyd Barrett

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CHAPTER I

ENIGMAS OF CATHOLICISM

WHETHER St. Peter was something of a wag, or somewhat indolent in temperament, or tolerably dull of understanding we do not know for certain. We do know, however, that having in one of his letters referred to "some things hard to be understood" that "his beloved brother Paul" had written he snapped his lips together. He thought it wiser or beyond him or better fun not to put the Pauline riddles into plain language for plain folk, and thereby most unfortunately gave the Church a precedent for acting and speaking in a cryptic manner. Since Paul's day enigmas have multiplied like barnacles on the bark of Peter, and for the man who likes doctrine and practice to be simple and intelligible, Catholicism is a veritable nightmare.

We like to think that early Christianity was so simple and homely that it was intelligible even to children. Whether or not it was so, we have clear evidence that as time went on it grew increasingly complex and intellectualised. Thanks to syncretism, and the adaptation of multitudinous items of paganism, Christian ritual became ever so cumbersome and complicated.

One need only contrast the simple baptism that Philip conferred on the Eunuch, with the hyper-ritualistic baptism of present-day Catholicism, to judge of the extent of the accretions that time brought. Catholicism receded ever farther from the ken and comprehension of plain folk. It would seem that the Church, instead of growing as Christ foretold in a natural, harmonious way like a mustard-seed, was thwarted or interfered with in its development. As a result some of its branches, instead of expanding upward and outward, intertwined and interlocked, in knots most difficult to unravel. The enigmas of Catholicism are, many of them, the outcome of conflicting motives that influenced the Church's policy and doctrines. So difficult indeed are her doctrines to understand that none of her theologians, not even the greatest, Aquinas and Augustine, were immune from "heresy" in their writings. A thorough understanding of Catholicism, without admixture of error, seems an impossible ideal. And in the region of behaviour, where there is question of living up to the true spirit of the Church, we are face to face with another problem as difficult as that of the understanding of her teaching. The true spirit of Catholicism is exceedingly elusive, so elusive indeed that one searches in vain, even among the saints, for its perfect exemplification. Was Bruno, the true Catholic, or Benedict Labré, or Loyola, or Francis de Sales, or Joan of Arc, or Francis of Assisi? No doubt each one of these Saints that I have named was admirable in virtue, but where are we to find the perfect type? They all differed in many respects from Jesus who was essentially Jewish, and pacifist, and may I say it with

the utmost reverence, *easy-going*. Was Jesus the perfect Catholic, although the enemy of ritualism and priest-craft? Or was Paul, who differed so much from Him? Or Peter? The question is, we suppose, insoluble. We leave it to consider the first of our enigmas which presents a very practical consideration, for every Catholic, young and old, lay and clerical.

Briefly put, the enigma springs from the admission of the element of menace (of the most terrible kind) into the spiritual guidance of the Church. The Church avowedly for the love of her children imposes, to take one instance, the law of abstinence from meat on Fridays. Her children for the good of their souls must be encouraged and recommended to do penance. So far, all is well, and there have been spiritual guides of innumerable shades of religious opinion who have considered asceticism healthful for the soul. But the Church goes farther. *She imposes her ascetical discipline under pain of mortal sin which means under threat of damnation.* Likewise in the case of her other precepts—the hearing of mass on Sunday—the reception of communion at Easter—she says, "Obey or you will be damned . . . and remember it is for love of your soul, and for charity that I issue this precept." But how can love and deadly menace mix and mingle harmoniously? What a conflict of motives! What a contradiction of purposes! The Church as "the good Shepherd" gathers neophytes into her fold. Then she becomes for them a stumbling-block to salvation, a veritable temptress. Many Catholics, well-intentioned and tolerably religious could live quite innocently and even

holily but for these soul-damning laws of the Church. They are, however, too lackadaisical to bother about hearing Mass every Sunday, and so in the eyes of the Church they are accursed. Priests too are victims of this menacing, mediæval spirit of the Church. If they neglect to read their Office, the reading of which is supposedly for their soul's good, they sin mortally and are thereupon liable to be damned. Cruel and short-sighted are such laws; utterly out of keeping with the spirit of Christ; completely out of harmony with the humanitarian thought of today; and yet the Church will not revoke them. Peter sleeps, and his Church while preaching salvation feeds souls to hell.

Another enigma presents itself in the manner in which Catholics are "made." As we shall see, from earliest infancy the attention of Catholic children is drawn to material elements of religion, and the first impressions implanted in their young minds are those of statues, holy pictures, scapulars and pious gestures. Their subsequent development into *pietistic* rather than moral and spiritually-minded Christians is inevitable. This peculiar mode of religious education is continued and emphasised at Catholic schools. The religion taught to the young is *largely* something to be achieved by the hands and lips rather than by the mind in the worship of God in spirit and truth. Who can say that such training represents the outcome of the age-old wisdom of Christianity? Why is the Church so slothful in focussing her attention on the problem; so reluctant to *risk* changing the existing system? It is strange that the Church which professes to set so much store on the

Christian up-bringing of the young, which so strenuously opposes every civil law which compels Catholic children to attend public schools, should be so indifferent to the inadequacy of her religious pedagogy. In her books of Theology the Church insists on scrupulous exactitude of expression, and on a carefully thought-out methodology, but in the matter of children's prayer-books, hymns and devotions she appears indifferent to the many fictions and superstitions that they contain. Yet it is clear that the education of the young in sound Christianity is a more important matter than the training of theologians in dogmatic disputation.

Another enigma presents itself in respect to dogma. Here we find a very strange synthesis, a commingling of belief and disbelief, of faith and agnosticism. We shall refer more fully to this matter when treating of the Catholic attitude towards "hell" and the "real presence." Every Catholic "believes" in hell and in the real presence, else he is not a Catholic. But in what manner does he *accept* the fact that there is a hell or that Christ is present in the Blessed Sacrament? These dogmas are so incomprehensible, so startling, that Catholics instinctively seek to escape from them. When at the focus-point of attention there begins to gather a faint realisation of what "hell" is or what the "real presence" signifies, the on-coming realisation is fought off and evaded. A Catholic will say, "I believe all that the Church teaches. The Church teaches that there is a hell, I therefore believe in hell." But faith of this kind is insubstantial. It does not set up any mental contact between the believer and the object

of his belief. It is too indirect, too tenuous. It is as though a child were to say "I possess this book. This book contains much knowledge. I, therefore, possess all the knowledge in this book." Of course in a sense the child "possesses" such knowledge, and in a sense the Catholic believes in hell. But his faith is largely fictional, even though he should, as many have done, die for that faith.

Corresponding to half-belief in hell and other dogmas, we find in Catholicism something of the nature of a positive-negative attitude towards the Bible, science, and democracy. The Church cherishes the Bible, reveres it, proclaims it to be God's Book *and yet is unwilling to encourage the faithful to read it.* The Church belauds science that is "true science," and hails it as the ally of faith. But all the while she puts obstacles in the path of its progress. The Church praises the fairness, liberality, and humanitarianism of democracy, but at the same time shoots at it the deadly harpoons of the Vatican Decrees and the Syllabus of Pius IX. It is a lie to say that the Church is against Bible-study, against science and against democracy, but it is equally a lie to say, without qualification, that the Church favors Bible-Study, science and democracy. Who can solve the riddle? What intellect but feels sick and dizzy on such a treadmill of the mind?

The Church professes to be Catholic (*i. e.*, universal) and boasts that it is her destiny to outlast time and push her frontiers to the limits of habitable space. Her sacraments and dogmas are for every age and all peo-

ples. Yet she has clothed herself in the garb of Western royalty; her court is kingly; her Cardinals are Princes; her little plot of territory is located for all time on the banks of an Apennine stream and she has become fixed in the ideas and customs of the middle ages. Her language is no less archaic than her customs. Her "High Priest," a slave to traditional etiquette, may not stir abroad nor suffer one iota of his inherited privileges to slip from his grasp. His rule is absolute; he holds all power in his hands. In spirit, in methods, even in external appearance the government of the Church belongs to an age long since past, and bears no promise of adjusting itself to the changed ideas of the modern world. The Grand Lama of Thibet shut up in isolated sanctity, out of touch with all things save ancient tradition, clothed physically and mentally in the obsolete, is the only other mortal whose existence bears any close resemblance to that of the Pope. And yet—herein lies the core of the enigma—Rome has succeeded in winning from her followers throughout the world, blind acceptance of a state of things that finds no clear sanction in the Christian religion. Rome stages a gigantic mystery play; a prodigious pageant featuring a King-Priest ruling the World, and the faithful pay all expenses and cry—"Holy, Holy, Holy!"

In respect of all that touches upon sex—birth-control, divorce, the celibacy of the clergy—the Church speaks from the pulpit of Aquinas' *Summa.* New discoveries, due to the progress of sociology, psychology or physiology, which have bearings on sex problems, do not in the least influence the Church's attitude. The pecu-

liar conditions that existed at the time when celibacy was made compulsory for the clergy have long since passed away but the Church acts as if the old conditions still prevailed. The discussion of the topic of clerical celibacy is looked upon, *in official quarters*, as an insulting interference with the Church's jurisdiction, albeit the State has an interest in all matters which concern the curtailment of population. The Church will not *divorce* married folk, but when appealed to she often *discovers*, to the unfeigned surprise of all, that parties supposedly married were celibate all the time and forthwith authorises their separation. *She herself determines the conditions which constitute valid marriage* . . . she can add to or subtract from such conditions . . . she holds as a consequence the master-key of "annulments" . . . but, although annulling *almost* amounts to the same thing as "divorcing," she will not countenance divorce. She could, did she think fit, make as a condition for the validity of marriage, the absence of "uncontrollable sex urges" as she has already made the absence of psychical impotence. And were a Catholic to find, subsequent to this new law, that his wife was guilty of adultery, he could appeal to the Church for a separation on the ground that at the time of his marriage his wife was subject to "uncontrollable sex urges." The separation might then be granted on the grounds that the marriage so-called was null and void. The Church, however, prefers that inevitable infidelities should occur (where two uncongenial folk are married), and that prostitution should thrive, and that offspring should be subjected to the misery of an unhappy home, than that there should be separation on this Biblical ground.

Rather than relax her teachings on birth-control, the Church, if we are to believe the brilliant English Jesuit, Rev. C. C. Martindale, will suffer countless millions of her children to be damned. "I think," he wrote in 1928, "that the frightful—I repeat, the frightful—burden rightly laid on the average Catholic citizen by way of the Catholic doctrine concerning birth-restriction, tends to break down the allegiance of thousands whose shoulders are not exceptionally strong. I should not be in the least surprised to see, in a century, no Catholic country anywhere left, but strong, self-conscious suffering Catholic minorities in every country." The Church, then, may be interpreted as preferring the damnation of the majority of her children to the humiliation of accepting the non-Catholic understanding of the moral law on this point of the legitimacy of practicing birth-restriction.

To these and many other riddles of Catholicism we shall refer in the pages that follow. Each one of them has a bearing, direct or indirect, on the Catholic situation in America, for if one is not mistaken the Church in this country is in the throes of the child-birth of an un-mediæval, up-to-date Catholicism. America is endeavouring to show that the practice of Catholicism is possible without the inspiration of European ecclesiasticism. Furthermore, America is consciously (and unconsciously) driving a wedge between two classes of church doctrine, that which is indisputably "infallible" and that which falls short of such a high-water mark of truth.

CHAPTER II

SAINTS IN THE MAKING

WE propose in this chapter to accept guidance from the old adage "the child is father to the man" and to search for the secret of adult Catholicism in the Catholicism of Paddy, Josephine and Michael, aged respectively nine, eight and seven years. It may be somewhat Machiavellian to pry into the religion of parents and elders by analysing the religion of the young folk, but the system gives promise of being successful, and we think it is worth trying. Besides, it is in keeping with the genetic method in vogue in psychology, according to which developments are traced step by step with increasing age.

If there is such a thing as embryonic Catholicism, it is to be found in the fresh unbiassed minds of Catholic children, and in their spontaneous reactions to the religious doctrines and practices that are offered them. In the light of such reactions the value of the spirituality contained in such doctrines and practices is to be judged. One may say that it is strange that inquirers into the nature of Catholicism do not devote their attention to the little boys and girls that nuns are teaching rather than to the answers priests give

to their questions. No less strange is it that militant Catholics, actively engaged in disabusing so-called bigots of their prejudices, do not call up as witnesses to the purity and spirituality of Catholicism its tender neophytes.

Catholic children receive their earliest religious training from their parents (and grandparents). Later, brothers, young priests and nuns continue the work. The Church, as is well known, insists that Catholic children be sent to Catholic schools and does not conceal her dislike of the atmosphere of non-Catholic schools. In America immense sums are spent yearly in every diocese on Catholic primary schools. The Cleveland diocese, for example, spends $3,000,000 annually on new parish schools and convents. In 1927, the Catholic bishops of America opened 120 new elementary schools at a cost of $15,000,000, and 35 new high-schools at a cost of $8,000,000. The Church, however, does not provide any modern method of teaching religion, to correspond with the modern buildings which she constructs. The traditional method, based upon the prayers and customs in vogue, is followed, and almost the same routine obtains all the world over, in teaching Catholic children the "A. B. C." of religion. Where parents are pious (and it is pious parents and a "good Catholic home" that we have in mind in this chapter), religion is carefully and continuously taught . . . first prayers, then practices, *then more practices*, and lastly a little doctrine. Children are protected from seeing or knowing anything wrong or evil; and the home is furnished with holy pictures and statues and

other sacred objects, with a view to creating an appropriate atmosphere for the upbringing of saints.

Pious Catholic parents almost without exception have in view the rearing of at least one "saint," one to be consecrated to God as a priest, one destined to officiate at "the altar of God." In consequence they aim at giving their children as perfect a religious training as possible. In accordance with the teaching of many popes, Leo XIII and Pius X in particular, pious Catholic parents make home a replica of "Nazareth," the abode of the Holy Family which comprised Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

In such a "good Catholic home," one which reproduces fairly closely the traditional ideal, the bells of heaven chime oft and sweetly. The air breathed is a zephyr stirred by Angels' wings. The lights and shadows are spiritual joys and sorrows. In the dusk and in the sunlight alike the footsteps of God are heard. The Blessed Virgin is the gentle, albeit invisible, mistress of the house. The right of entry at any hour belongs to the Saints, and a warm welcome awaits their coming. The doors are tightly barred against the Evil One, and if *his* noisy hounds are heard to yelp there is gloom.

The household, servants included, are all "consecrated" to the "Holy Family," and in a conspicuous place there hangs a picture of a little house, purporting to be that of Joseph . . . a bright-haired boy holds a hammer rather absent-mindedly . . . a mild old man is bending as he raises a piece of wood . . . seated on a low bench in the corner the Madonna is busy aweaving. Her eyes are downcast. Parents, serv-

ants and children are inspired by this picture to bear in mind the ideal of true Christian family life.

The household is likewise "consecrated" to the Sacred Heart, and a picture of Jesus hangs on the wall of the sitting-room. Pensive, tender-eyed, bearded, with his heart visible and aglow in the centre of his bosom, *He* watches over the comings and goings of the various members of the family, and is pleased or hurt in turn by the good or naughty things said and done. In another room, on an altar or stand, there is a fairly large statue of the Blessed Virgin, sweet and matronly, dressed in blue and white, with a crown of gold on her head. At her feet a lamp burns between two vases of flowers.

The sense of the proximity of the supernatural is duly cultivated, and on frequent occasions amid quivering expectancy a miraculous manifestation is looked for. For instance, Mother has just lost her keys. She has searched everywhere and cannot find them. The children are called and all kneel to say a prayer to Saint Anthony that the keys may be found. A general search begins. Surely now the keys will be found! Saint Anthony never fails! Suddenly there is a cry of joy! "Here they are, Mother!" All kneel again for a moment to thank Saint Anthony and domestic life resumes its normal course. The spiritual vibration, felt by everyone, has passed. But before long there will be another *manifestation* of the nearness of God and his Saints. To doubt that prayers are promptly answered; to doubt that the Saints are powerful or that they are deeply interested in the welfare, both temporal and spiritual, of the family and of each of its members

would be a crime in a good Catholic household. Otherworldliness, piety, and devotional impulse are cultivated, and there is a ceaseless unconscious listening to the beating of Angels' wings.

When one enters into details of the religious life of a Catholic child one finds much that is spiritual, much that smacks of chivalry, much that is calculated to prove a refining influence. There is much also that is exquisitely picturesque. In a sense the Catholic child has a more wonderful early life than any other child. The dreamland in which he abides is bright, emotionally real, varied, and peopled by the most charming persons. As constant companion and faithful protector, he has a bright-faced Angel . . . "*Dear Angel, ever at my side.*" As a second mother he has a star-crowned Queen. He has Agnes and Stanislaus and big St. Christopher, and little Pancratius, as spiritual playmates. He has ways of getting in touch with them and of hearing their stories—how they were martyred, what they did for Jesus, and so on. There is no end of spiritual "toys" in his sacred nursery, medals, rosaries, pretty pictures of God's heroes, and so on. All represent reality for him . . . his mind is so full of faith that he has vision and knowledge. He is happy in his religion, and finds no tediousness in it until he grows up and can no longer count his years on his fingers.

Among the commonest factors in the early life of Catholic children we may take two as exemplifying trends in the religious training they receive: one, the use of the scapular; the other, the use of "holy water."

The scapular, which is worn round the neck (in ap-

pearance it resembles two small squares of brown cloth joined together by strings of brown tape), symbolises the child's consecration to the Blessed Virgin, and his claim on her protection. The child is taught to wear his scapular day and night, and he hears pious stories that inevitably awaken in his mind the conviction that as long as he wears the scapular he can neither be burned to death nor drowned. Of course these beliefs are also taught him directly, though not as being authoritatively guaranteed by the Church.

The stories are of this kind. "Once upon a time two boys went out to swim. One of them was a good boy and wore his scapular. The other boy had forgotten to put on his scapular. Well, while they were swimming a great wave came and swept the boys out to sea. The boy who had his scauplar round his neck was carried by a current to a rock and was saved. The other boy was drowned."—"Once upon a time there was a poor woman living all alone in a little wooden house, far away from everyone. She was very holy and always wore her scapular. Well, one night when she was fast asleep her house went on fire. She woke up and saw that all her little things would be burned unless the fire was put out. She lived far from the well, and had no water. Suddenly she thought about her scapular . . . she said a prayer and threw it into the fire. The fire was at once miraculously extinguished, and her home was saved."

Omitting for a while the consideration of the effect on the subsequent religious conduct of a child, of stories of this kind, we shall turn to consider the use of "holy water" in the early training of Catholics.

At night when bed-time draws near a Catholic child kneels and says his prayers *to* his mother or grandmother. Then he goes to bed and before the light is turned down some one has to *sprinkle him with holy water*. This means that little drops of the blessed water have to be scattered piously over him and his bed and the room in which he sleeps. Unless this is done the child will not feel safe or happy . . . for him it is a most important ceremony since it guarantees his safety during the night against the powers of evil. Naturally the child falls a victim to the suggestion that there is inherent in this consecrated water *magical power*. He has heard and believes that there occurs terrific sizzling when "holy water" comes in contact with the Devil!

Perhaps the most refining and ennobling influence in the early religious life of the child is devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Most Catholic children have a very beautiful and tender affection for their "Mother Mary." It is no unusual thing for them, on their own initiative, to buy candles to light before her statue, or to gather flowers to place on her altar. With no little chivalry Catholic children pledge themselves "to defend her honour," and "never to depart either by word or action from the duty they owe her." The very beautiful Madonnas, copies of which are to be found in Catholic schools and homes, and the very pretty verses written in her praise by great poets, are for many Catholic children the source of artistic inspiration. More important still, in thinking about Mary, children form the nucleus of a just conception of the heroism and altruism of good women.

Investigators of Catholicism as it exists in the child

mind will probably agree that Catholic religious training is successful in the important task of awakening in the young an appreciation of the *immaterial*, and of the sacred. The basic ideas of religion are conveyed to children, and the foundations of idealism are laid. But it is more than likely that investigators of Catholicism as it exists in the minds of the young will be amazed at the number of unwholesome suggestions conveyed, with apparent insouciance, by religious teachers. It may not be too much to say that the result of early Catholic training is rather disastrous on account of these latter factors.[1]

First of all, there is an excessive reliance on religious fictions. The child is made to pray thus, while still 'way back in the age of innocence: "Before thee I stand a sorrowful sinner." At the time he utters these words he is *not* standing but kneeling (an important discrepancy for the child mind); nor is he *sorrowful*, except fictionally; nor a *sinner*. Again he is taught to speak of himself each day as a "poor banished child of Eve." He is taught the superstitions connected with the scapular, to which I have referred, and many such-like fantasies. He is made to sing: (what an encouragement to gross egotism!)

"I am Jesus' little lamb,
Happy all day long I am,
He will keep me safe from harm,
For I'm His lamb.

[1] To a non-Catholic the description given of the home-piety of devout Catholics may seem far-fetched, but I have minimised rather than exaggerated its peculiarities.

"Jesus loves me well, I know,
He will make me white as snow,
He will keep me pure, I know,
For I'm His lamb."

Apart from possible explanations of theologians who pretend to find a basis in Scripture for hymns of this kind, what one has to look to is *the effect on the child mind* of the words and thoughts contained therein! The sentimentalism and the egotism are bad enough, but the concomitance of the fictional with these other elements is positively poisonous. The prayer which follows, however theologically defensible, belongs to the same class: "My divine Saviour Jesus, *who for love of me* art day and night present on our altars." [1] What effect can such a prayer have save that of making the child feel that he is a "special pet" of the Saviour? How can he escape from becoming a religious prig?

The second and perhaps most unhappy result of early Catholic training is that it *awakens in the child's mind fear of hidden, threatening danger*—and in particular of "dangers of the night." We have referred to the effect produced (as we believe) on the child's mind by the ceremony of sprinkling "holy water" over him in bed at night. "Holy water," however, is not the only defence that he is taught to set up against the supposed nocturnal attacks of the Evil One. "St. Michael," he prays, "be my protection against the malice and snares of the devil." He seeks his angel-guardian's assistance each night and then repeats:

[1] "The Child's Prayerbook," New York, 1921, *Imprimatur,* Cardinal Hayes.

"As I lie on my bed to sleep,
I call on God my soul to keep,
If any evil comes to me,
My Blessed Lady waken me."

In the morning he thanks God for having "delivered him from *many dangers* during the past night." In his night-prayers he says: "Almighty God . . . grant that we may be delivered from instant evil and everlasting death." These are terrifying words for a young child—"instant evil," "everlasting death"—and the pessimism conceived as a result, grows apace as he turns to the Blessed Virgin saying: "*To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.*" Were there no devil, no hell, no "instant evils and everlasting death," how perfectly happy a Catholic child would be in the sacred and entrancing realm of his divine religion! But, alas! for his peace of mind, he comes to learn that the Devil is as real as his Mother Mary, and hell as true and as near as heaven. His holy fairy-land is cruelly invaded by evil gnomes, and its brightness is darkened and chilled by hideous mists.

A third unwholesome factor enters the child-mind in the form of expectancy of sin. Apart from all theological questions concerning the nature of evil, it is difficult to see the advantage from a religious point of view of teaching the child a precocious terror of sin, and then of prematurely setting the child (in examinations of conscience) to search for and discover its presence in his soul. The Catholic method seems antiquated, and ill-conceived, in allowing a *child* to examine his conscience in the following manner:[1]

"Have I Sinned Against Myself?

[1] "The Child's Prayerbook," New York, 1921, *Imprimatur,* Cardinal Hayes.

"By vanity, human respect, lies, thoughts, desires or actions contrary to purity; by intemperance, rage or impatience; by a useless and sensual life; or by sloth in not complying with the duties of my state?"

This is a form of *daily* examination of conscience in use among Catholic children in New York, and approved for them in 1921 by His Eminence Cardinal Hayes. The children have to resolve each morning to "avoid sin and conquer concupiscence"—lest, we suppose, the little mites "lead useless and sensual lives." With such emphasis laid daily on sin, a sense of defeatism, of inferiority, of pessimism, is more than likely to awaken in the minds of sensitive and susceptible children. And, in fact, not a few Catholics in after life trace back the origin of their nervous depression to this factor.

Catholic children are taught very emphatically the lesson of the danger and wickedness of inter-confessionalism. The "exclusiveness" of the Catholic Church is impressed upon their minds. Together with love and reverence for the clergy, nuns, and above all the Pope, unswerving loyalty to the faith is inculcated. The Catholic child sings:

"I am a little Catholic,
And I love my holy Faith,
I will be true to Holy Church,
And faithful unto death.

"I shun the schools of those who seek
To ensnare poor Catholic youth.
No Church I know, no school I own,
Save those that teach the truth."

The epitome of the child's attitude towards his faith and Church is to be found in his "profession" before his first Communion. "I give thee thanks, O God, because thou hast called me to the true faith, to thy Holy and Infallible Church. I profess solemnly and publicly before Thee, thy holy Angels and elect . . . that I firmly believe and hold as true whatever thy Infallible Church teaches. With complete submission of my understanding I will faithfully follow the doctrines and practices of this Church and will never separate myself from it. A Catholic I live and die." While there can be no doubt that the inculcation of an exclusive attitude in respect of creed tells for the spirit of cohesion it is difficult to see how it tells for the unification of Christian religions, or for the spirit of tolerance and democracy. The tendency of religious training along such lines is to canonise cocksureness and to throw a false glamour over reaction and dogmatism.

There is much realism in the religion of the Catholic child which at times is grotesquely betrayed. A story, told me at first hand, comes to mind of two children not over-well instructed in the faith, who at a mission sermon heard that "*Jesus Christ could do all things.*" After the sermon, the pair, a brother and sister, bought a "Jesus" (a plaster statuette) for a dime, and resolved to put the faith that was in them to a test. "He'll be able to swim," said Paddy to Brigid, "for if he can do all things he can swim." They made up their minds to throw "Jesus" into a canal on the way home. They stood on a bridge and "Jesus" made a splash *and sank.* "Didn't I tell you," said Paddy to his disappointed sister, "that the priest tells lies?"

It would be wearisome to dwell further upon the shortcomings of the early religious training of Catholics. In general Catholic children are given religious *hors d'œuvres*, instead of simple spiritual food. Objects of exotic piety, "agnus deis," medals, toy cribs, statues of Angels and Saints, figure in their religious practices, and *they are snowed under with spiritual confetti.* However picturesque and refining the pious practices taught them, they are at best artifacts of the mystic imagination. Catholic children are drawn away from the wholesome lessons of science to listen to the doctrines of contemplatives. Instead of the God of Nature, they are shown the God of rubric and ritual, the God of dogma and orthodoxy, *the God of theologians.*

One has no difficulty in tracing the mentality of the Latin mind in the religious pedagogy of the Church. The stressing of the emotional; the cultivation of pious fictions; the delight in the colorfulness of the material emblem; the care-free indifference to keeping pace with developments of human thought are all indicative of an artistic but impractical Latin religious spirit. Unless Peter wakes up to the seriousness of the situation, to the injury done to Catholicism by the continuance of this nonsensical religious pedagogy, the Church will drift farther and farther out of her course.

CHAPTER III

A SAINT AT SCHOOL

THE religious training given in a "good Catholic home" is continued in a "good Catholic school." In some schools of course greater emphasis is laid upon devotionalism than in others. English, Irish and Continental schools are possibly more pietistic than American schools, but even in the latter boy-saints like Aloysius are proposed as models . . . *the consequences are inevitable.* The character of Catholic school training (in religion) may be judged tolerably well from the following extracts from letters of a boy at a Catholic school (not in America, however) to his mother. The extracts remain substantially unchanged . . . they were written by an intelligent but high-strung boy during his later teens. The word "college" in his vocabulary would correspond to "preparatory school" in American parlance.

"My Dearest Mother,

In your last letter you asked me to tell you if I say my prayers regularly, and if religious instruction is given here often. Well, of course I say my prayers, and more of them than I said at home. There are prayers read aloud in the chapel before Mass every morning . . . they are rather long . . . some of them I never

heard before but they are quite nice. Then we have Mass, and after Mass we wait in the chapel until the boys who receive communion have finished their 'thanksgiving.' After that we all go to breakfast. A priest says grace before and after breakfast and before and after all other meals. Before each class and after each class the Master kneels down, (and all the boys), and the 'Our Father,' or 'Three Hail Marys' is recited. It is like that before and after every public duty. As for Catechism, we have to spend the first ten minutes of study-time each day learning our Catechism lesson, and we have also (every day) a twenty minutes Catechism class . . . on Sundays it lasts an hour. I hear there are prizes (money prizes) given to those who do best at the Catechism Exams., at Christmas, and Easter."

"We have sermons here every Sunday, and also short sermons, just before Mass, occasionally. I think they are very good sermons on the whole and the boys all listen very attentively. The longer the Sunday sermon is the more the boys like it because they 'get off study' . . . that is, the sermon cuts into study time. One priest preaches very long sermons, and tells great stories about the boy Saints, Aloysius and Stanislaus, and others. It would almost make you wish to be a Saint to hear the wonderful things they did, and what happy deaths they died. At home the sermons are not half so interesting for boys . . . somehow the sermons here seem to be more suited to boys. One of the stories was about a Saint who ran away from home in order to become a priest.

We all have to learn to serve Mass here . . . every boy must serve Mass in turn, so please send me patent-leather slippers for serving Mass. Also I have a chance of being made an 'acolyte.' That would mean that I would have to serve benediction with six other boys a couple of times a week, and also the chief Mass on Sundays. There is a 'feed' twice a year for acolytes . . . it is a fine thing to be one!"

"I want to tell you about the sodalities. The first year here you have to join the 'Holy Angels' sodality. That means that you and the other members have a special sermon on Saturday evenings, and special prayers, and that you are consecrated to the Holy Angels. Next year there is another sodality to join, and after that you can join the Sodality of the Children of Mary. You have to be very good to get into that Sodality; the old members vote on the applicants for admission, and if they have anything against you, I mean if you have not a good name, they blackball you, and you cannot apply again for admission for another year. The morning you are admitted into the 'Children of Mary' Sodality there is a great breakfast and you get off study. When my time comes I will have to get the special silver medal that they wear around their necks . . . it costs five dollars . . . but you keep it all your life as it reminds you that you are a 'Child of Mary,' and specially consecrated to her."

"I would like if you sent me a few nice pictures to hang up in my cubicle. . . . I would like a picture of the Sacred Heart, and another of 'Our Lady of Perpetual

Succor,' (we heard a grand sermon about *her* last Sunday), and also my favourite picture of St. Anthony. Nearly all the boys have pictures of the Blessed Virgin and the Sacred Heart. We also have crucifixes in our cubicles—they are supplied by the college—and of course we have Holy Water fonts also. I would like to subscribe fifty cents to the 'Propagation of the Faith' as there is a boy here who collects for it. As soon as you send me some more money I will pay my subscription. I gave my subscription to the 'Apostleship of Prayer,' as it was only ten cents. There are a lot of demands for money—however as all the boys subscribe the same, one does not mind."

"It is funny how confessions are arranged here. The different classes in turn leave the study hall when called for confessions on Saturday nights. There is a wild rush from the Study Hall to the Chapel, as most of the boys like to go to the popular priests—there are two very nice priests—and unless you hurry up you have to go to one of the others. There is one bald priest here who holds his head very low down when he is hearing your confession. Some of the boys blow on his head during confession and he thinks it is a draught and begins to rub his head. There was a 'row' in the chapel the other day . . . the boys all began to scrape their feet against the pews and make noise. I think they did it to annoy the priest in charge of the chapel as he is very unpopular. I thought it was awful and I didn't scrape my feet like the others. But all of them didn't do it. I saw a lot of good fellows who kept perfectly

still. The priest got into a great rage and ordered some of the boys to leave the chapel. He called out their names. I suppose they will get into a terrible row over it."

"Yesterday there was a lovely procession in honour of Our Lady. The boys all carried candles and sang hymns and the acolytes scattered flowers. The statue was carried along the corridors—I never saw anything so touching. I saw some of the boys had tears in their eyes. There was a lovely sermon on the virtue of Our Lady and how every boy should always live as pure as the angels, and that then he would be perfectly certain of going straight to heaven. I know that there are some of the boys who tell smutty stories and I think they must have felt awful. I looked at one of them during the sermon and he was blushing like anything."

"We have to study a few pages of the history of the Church every week, but it is very uninteresting. Only we have it for the Exam. at the end of the year I wouldn't be bothered studying it. It is written by a French priest and is very dry except the part about the Crusades which was interesting. In one of the lessons it stated that there was a great dispute between some Cardinals, and that a second Pope was elected. Of course there could have been only one *real* Pope but a lot of people did not know who was the real Pope. The dispute did not last for very long and it was really a blessing in disguise; I mean God allowed the dispute to occur so as to make the Church more holy. It can never happen again and both the Popes were very good

men. Only I thought it funny that I never heard of it before—anyway I don't remember Papa telling me anything about it."

"We had a retreat for three days. There were four sermons each day and we had to keep silence all the time. We had a lot of new books given us to read—all holy books of course—and most of them lives of Saints. I read the life of St. Ignatius Loyola who founded the Order of the Jesuits. I was very interested in his life and thought he was very brave and determined. He nearly killed a Moor because the Moor said that the Blessed Virgin had other children besides Jesus. Anyhow, St. Ignatius who was riding a mule followed the Moor, and came to a cross-roads. He hadn't quite made up his mind whether or not to kill the Moor, so he left it to the mule. If the mule took the turn that the Moor had taken, St. Ignatius was going to kill him as soon as he overtook him. But God guided the mule to take the other turn, so St. Ignatius never killed the Moor.

"Another time St. Ignatius played billiards or pool with some great sinner, and the sinner was to go to confession if he was beaten—I forget what St. Ignatius was to do if he was beaten. Anyhow St. Ignatius won easily, although he had never played pool before! He soon converted the sinner. I like stories like that. Somehow they do me more good than the very pious ones.

"We all had to make 'general' confessions during the retreat and had to think seriously whether or not we were going to be priests—at least I think that that was what the director of the Retreat meant when he

said we should pray to be guided to a true choice of a state of life. It must be grand to be saving thousands of souls, although I don't feel a bit like being a priest yet."

"A priest came and gave us a wonderful lecture on the 'Little Flower.' He told us all about her heroic virtues although she was only a mere child. He had relics of her and we all knelt and kissed them, also a piece of paper that she had written her name on. We kissed the wrapper in which it was folded. The wrapper was all wet by the time it came to my turn to kiss it. He enrolled us all in a league for doing honour to the 'Little Flower.' We have to subscribe ten cents every year. A lot of boys bought pictures of her and have hung them up in their cubicles.

"We had a wonderful sermon last Sunday. It was on 'ejaculations,' the saying of short indulgenced prayers many times a day. The priest said we could all become saints by this means alone, namely, by making pious ejaculations. He said that we should have various 'ejaculations' or 'aspirations' for the various duties of the day. He told us a few funny stories, one was about an atheist (a man who believes in nothing at all), who got a great fright—a dark figure suddenly appeared in his room at night—and he shouted out 'O! God, there's the devil.' That showed that no one can be a real atheist! Everyone has to believe in God, and when he says he doesn't believe in God he is only pretending! The priest made us all promise to make at least ten 'ejaculations' every day of our lives."

"I had a fight with a boy the other day. He is a rotten character and deserved the licking I gave him. We were talking about home, and he said that the priests in his place only think about how much money they can get out of the people, and that he saw one of them drunk. I told him he was a liar, and the row began. I knocked him down pretty quick. I think it is rotten of anyone to be telling lies against the priests. One of the priests here told me afterwards that I was quite right to do as I did and that he wished there were more like me. So you see.

"We are certainly getting a great preparation for life here. We have a lesson now each week in what is called 'apologetics.' It means that we are trained to answer the most difficult objections that can be raised by clever infidels against the Catholic faith. The priest in charge of this class says that scientists are trying to destroy the Catholic Church and that every good Catholic must be ready to refute their arguments. He said that the worst attack ever made against the Church was the attack made by Darwin who tried to prove (of course he didn't really succeed in proving it) that we were evolved from monkeys. This theory—'evolution'—is quite absurd, but even if there were something in it, it would not prove anything against the Catholic Faith.

"He explained to us that the easiest way to refute evolution was to show that it could never be proved. He is a very clever man and it isn't easy to follow what he says but we will have to memorise his argument. He has also given us easy and evident proofs of the existence of God, and of the immortality of the soul. These

questions belong to philosophy, but all the same one can understand them very well if one listens carefully. In our apologetics class next term we are to refute other attacks made against the Church, and to study the proofs of the Infallibility of the Pope."

"I have a great secret to tell you, Mother Dear, in this letter. I think I have a vocation to be a priest! I am going to pray very hard to God that I may know for certain. What put it into my mind was this. I have a great friend a priest here and he took me out for a walk and he told me how when he was a young fellow like myself his father died and left him a lot of money. Soon afterwards he was visiting an uncle of his in a country town and while he was there, a terrible thunder storm broke. The lightning flashes were terrific. Suddenly there was a tremendous crash and a bolt struck the house. He was terror-stricken and rushed downstairs to find his old uncle, with whom he was staying, had fallen unconscious on the floor. This old uncle had not been to Mass or Confession for years. When the doctor came he said that his uncle had had a stroke and might never recover consciousness. Then my friend, the priest, promised God that he would become a priest if his uncle regained consciousness for long enough to receive the last sacraments. And sure enough he revived and died a holy death. I tell you, that story has made an impression on me, and after all; 'What does it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffers the loss of his soul.' I know you would love me to be a priest, and I hope God will give me the vocation. I don't know why Fr. 'X' told me so much about himself. It was very kind

of him to do so. I *think* he would like me to be a priest. He has given me leave to take care of one of the altars in the chapel, and he often gets me to serve his Mass."

"A boy was expelled from college, the other day for something bad. He brought some bad pictures into the college, and was caught showing them to another boy. We had a terrible sermon on impurity in the chapel afterwards; only the bigger boys were allowed in. We were told that boys who are impure contract terrible diseases and rot away. Also we were warned that there is no sin that damns so many boys as impurity—and the eternity of hell is not sufficient to punish them for such sins! It was an awful sermon and everyone seemed frightened. There is to be a novena in honor of St. Aloysius and we have all to pray for angelical purity. St. Aloysius would not even look at his mother's face he was so modest! But I don't see any sin in that, do you? I know you don't!"

"There was a lot of laughing in the chapel the other evening. One of the boys put some ink in the Holy Water font at the entrance to the chapel so that everyone on entering and taking holy water should get marked with ink. It worked out fine! Everyone had a black blotch on his forehead, and of course it wasn't easy to rub out. I couldn't help laughing. The boy has not yet been caught.

"A lot of the boys have begun to make a few extra visits to the chapel each day. The reason is, there is a new devotion started in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, and those who have joined it have to make an extra visit (one not of obligation) to the chapel every

single day. I joined too. The other day I forgot my visit until after I had gone to bed, and then I didn't know what to do. I knew it wasn't a sin, but I was afraid that I would break my promise if I didn't get up again and make my visit to the chapel. So I dressed myself and went down to the chapel. I was a bit afraid as the corridors were all dark, and as there is a rumour that *footsteps* are heard going up and down the stairs near the chapel. I hurried along anyway and did not hear the ghostly footsteps. I was glad however to get back to bed again."

"By the way it is a great mistake to suppose that the Catholic Church teaches that only Catholics can be saved.—I mean that everyone who is not a Catholic is necessarily lost. I want to tell you this on account of Mr. and Mrs. —— They are so nice and so good although they are Protestants, that I was always sure and now I am certain that they can be saved. A very clever priest (the priest who teaches us apologetics) explained in class the other day that though there is a 'dogma' to the effect that no one can be saved who is not in the Church, still this dogma can mean, and most probably does mean, that some who are outside the Church (like good Protestants) *are really within it.* For they are in the *soul of the Church!* And that is sufficient for salvation! I was delighted when I heard this. You see now that Mr. and Mrs. —— are not really Protestants, although they say and think they are, for they are *in the soul of the Catholic Church* and are therefore Catholics!"

"Some of the boys now go to Confession a few times a week. I thought this was strange until we had a great sermon on Confession in which the Priest told us a story of a very holy Cardinal, I think his name was Franzelein who used to go to Confession *several times a day*. His idea was that Confession is a sacrament which confers grace. And the more often you receive this sacrament the more grace you get. And as grace is so precious it is wise to get as much as you can and as quickly as you can. There is also another reason I think for having Confessions every day. It is a terrible thing to remain even for a minute in the state of mortal sin—so if you have daily Confessions and have the misfortune to commit a mortal sin you can obtain forgiveness at once. Some of the boys who go so often to Confession may be going to obtain more grace, others because they have committed mortal sin. So since there are the two classes going you can never know, and the secrecy of Confession is perfectly preserved! The boy whom you see slipping away from recreation to go to Confession, may be really going for sake of the additional sanctifying grace, so it is not right for anyone to suspect that he has committed a mortal sin! How wise it was of the priest to tell that story about Cardinal Franzelein!"

"I read a great account of the 'Papal States' and the glorious history of the generosity of the Popes to their subjects. I think it was wonderful of those holy old Popes to go forth to battle, fighting for the Church's independence, like Julius II and risking their lives to defend the territory of Christ! How wonderful it would

have been to be a soldier in the Pope's army and to show one's devotion by fighting for the Vicar of Christ! I think it was the most shameful thing that ever happened when Pius IX was robbed of the Papal States for which he had done so much. However he was able to take a holy revenge by excommunicating Victor Emmanuel and all the other ruffians, Garibaldi and the rest. I hope the present Pope will soon regain all the 'patrimony of Peter,' and rule over the whole world. The 'Spiritual Father' here, a very saintly priest, told us that we should pray every day that God might restore to the Pope his lawful possessions.

"I have now got three Rosaries to say every day . . . the ordinary rosary five decades; the rosary of the Immaculate Conception, three decades; and the Dolor beads, seven decades. I say the Dolors and the Immaculate Conception rosary at night before I go to bed. I got into saying the Dolors from reading a booklet on the subject. You know these little booklets are always on sale here and we are encouraged to buy them. The proceeds of the sale of these books go to the foreign missions.

"A Japanese priest gave us a lecture yesterday. It was very pious and I think most of the boys were bored. His English was not too good and it was hard to make out what he was saying. But he told us that the Church was making great progress in Japan and that only for the shortage of funds and the hostility of Protestant missionary Societies, which really did far more harm than good, and which tried to pervert the Catholic na-

tives, they would soon have the whole country in the One True Church. He was very enthusiastic and optimistic, and asked for names of volunteers to co-operate with the mission. I didn't give in my name."

"A very curious thing occurred to me the other day . . . but perhaps I shouldn't say that it was curious—but simply that it was something like a special grace. I must tell you the whole thing even though you may blame me afterwards for boasting. Well, this was it. As you know Friday last was the feast of the 'Little Flower.' I have begun to say a lot of prayers to her lately. I remembered about her feast and resolved to offer up my Mass and Communion for her honour and for her intentions. Then what did I do, in her honour (now don't blame me for what seems a boast)—I only took black tea and dry bread for breakfast! It was just a little act of self-denial such as the Sodalists are recommended to make sometimes. Well, after breakfast I felt hungry still, and went to my desk where I had a nice piece of cake. I was just going to eat it, when I said to myself that that would be undoing the little good I had done, so instead of eating it I gave it to a boy who doesn't often have cake, and I went out in the playground and lay down in the grass. Now the place where I lay down is just ordinary grass, and it is much worn down from boys playing on it, and of course there are no flowers near it. I was only lying there for a minute or so when suddenly a most lovely aroma of *violets* filled my nostrils. I never had so fresh or pleasant an odour of violets before. I looked around and there was no one near. I didn't know what to make of it

. . . when suddenly I remembered . . . 'my goodness, it is from the Little Flower.' I needn't say I ran straight to the chapel and thanked her with all my heart for her miraculous manifestation to me. Of course I told my Confessor about it, afterwards, and he said it seemed to him to be miraculous, but that he couldn't be sure. He told me not to tell anyone about it, but of course, that did not mean that I was not to tell you. I had been reading, a few days previously, about such a thing happening—that is the 'odour of violets' sent by the 'Little Flower,' and I remembered wondering if such a thing would ever occur to me. It had made an impression on my mind. Wasn't it extraordinary? I'm going to pray now to the 'Little Flower,' that I may get first in my class and win the gold medal."

"Last week we played —— College, the great Presbyterian College. There was terrific excitement. I need not tell you we were determined to win. Our fellows trained harder than ever before, and were in fine fettle. Before the game our team all went to Communion, and during the game all our players wore the 'miraculous medal.' It was more like a fight against the devil than a game of football. Even the old Priests were there to cheer on the boys, and I saw some of the lay-brothers saying their beads while the battle was raging. It was a wonderful exhibition of Faith as well as of prowess at football, for we won easily! The altar of Our Lady was ablaze with votive candles that evening, for numbers of the boys had promised to light a candle in her honour if we won. It's queer that we should attach more importance to this match than to any other of the sea-

son, just because it is against a Presbyterian college! They were very nice fellows too, and took their licking in a sporting way. I was talking to one of them after the game and he said that our fellows seemed tremendously worked up, and didn't seem to be afraid of anything.

"Some of the Presbyterian fellows noticed that we flew the Papal colours on our flagstaff, and asked what they were. They didn't dare however to criticise us for this. They would have been murdered if they had said a word against the Pope!"

"A sort of tragedy has happened which has upset me very much. You remember my telling you a long time ago about a priest who told me the story of his vocation, how he resolved to be a priest when his Uncle got a stroke during a thunder storm. Well, isn't it awful? He has left the College, and it is rumoured that he is 'suspended.' I am terribly upset as I liked him very much and I think he liked me. Only a few of the boys know about it. None of the other priests will say anything, only that he has left the college and that he had a nervous breakdown. I think there must have been something which upset his faith, as he was a very clever man and was always reading very learned scientific books. Apparently it is dangerous, even for priests, to read these bad books of the rationalists! I know I will leave them alone if I am ever a priest, but now I don't think I ever will. I have got such a shaking by the departure of Fr. 'X'. I don't blame him though, for I know he was a very honourable man, and very conscientious. I wonder what I should do—it is a terrible

thought though—I wonder what I should do if I found myself a priest and found that I could no longer believe in the Catholic religion? Should I stay on pretending to believe, and forcing myself to obey outwardly the faith, or should I suddenly disappear like Fr. 'X.'?"

"I had an argument with one of the priests here the other day, we got a bit hot over it, and in the end he went off the reel and told me I was impertinent. But I didn't mean to be. I had asked him about a thing called 'equivocation' which we were told was lawful by our teacher of apologetics. It seemed to me to be nothing else than telling lies in a diplomatic way. So I asked this other priest about it. The question I put was based on something which I had read about a Jesuit theologian and his opinion on 'equivocation.' The Jesuit theologian said it was lawful for a judge on cross-questioning a Witch to promise her to 'provide for her for life' if she would truthfully answer his questions. The judge *meant* that he 'would provide for her for her life during the day or so that would elapse until she was burned.' Now, if anything in the world could be more deceitful or lying than the promise of that Judge I have yet to hear it. I asked the Priest wasn't this deliberate and unnecessary deception, and he denied that it was. He said it was lawful, as the Judge was in no way bound to make the meaning that he put on the words he uttered correspond to the meaning put upon them by the old woman. I thought that that was a mere quibble and asked 'how could a poor old woman be supposed to put any other interpretation on the words than their obvious meaning?' He denied that the mean-

ing she put on the words was, *under the circumstances of the case*, their obvious meaning! It was no good arguing. I said that I honestly thought it was a horrid doctrine and that I was sure that Our Lord would never have employed it. Here he caught me, because he reminded me that on one occasion Our Lord denied to the Apostles that He was going up to Jerusalem but went there all the same, and He knew at the time that He was going there.

" 'But,' said I, 'Our Lord would not have used equivocation to trap a poor old woman, so as to be able to burn her for witchcraft!' Then he lost his temper and the argument was over. I suppose I shall have to apologise to him for being impertinent, although I don't think I was."

"Now that I am in my last term at College I am becoming very argumentative. I had another argument with the same priest as before, but this time it was about hell. I often get very depressed and frightened when I think of hell. It is simply awful to imagine that ultimately *I* may be damned and that from this until my death, I am going to suffer a lot of anxiety about hell, and to do a thousand things in order that I may be saved, and yet after all, that I may be damned. God only knows where I shall be in a hundred years! And I am adoring Him now and calling Him good, and yet all the time (though He is giving me blessings and graces, and loving me for being in a state of grace), He knows that I will be suffering in hell fire for all eternity. It knocks the heart out of one to think of it! It keeps me awake at night sometimes, and especially

if there is a storm I am terrified—somehow thunder and lightning always remind me of hell.

"I told the priest what was passing through my mind, and he became very serious. He said that I looked upon everything in a wrong and almost heretical way. He said that although God foresaw where I should be in a hundred years, He in no way influenced my freedom, so that wherever I should be it would always be on account of my own free acts. 'Though God *permitted* evil, He did not *will evil*' . . . and so forth. I wasn't much consoled by what he said and we had a rather nasty argument over it. Anyhow I have made up my mind never to think about such things again, they do one no good and upset one's faith. I think the Church is quite right in prohibiting the ordinary faithful from reading criticisms of Catholic teaching made by non-Catholics."

With these extracts from the letters of a Catholic boy, brought up in a "good Catholic home" and afterwards educated in a "good Catholic school," I leave my reader to surmise whether or not Catholic school training is calculated to fit boys for life in the cynical, materialistic world of today.

CHAPTER IV

RELIABLE CATHOLICS

THERE are two classes of Catholics, standing in sharp contrast, each marked by interesting characteristics, "the reliables" and "the eccentrics." The former, the greatly larger class, comprises the *peculiarly* normal, average Catholics. The latter class, to which the chapter that follows is devoted, and which is by no means inconsiderable numerically, is one of the incalculable factors in the fold of Peter.

In general, "reliable Catholics" are the rank and file of the Church, who, though uninterested in the scientific aspects of religion, are the unerring representatives of Catholic opinion. They differ widely in the manner in which in private life they interpret the moral law. Many of them obey the code of libertines. But in the Catholic world they are reputed to be observant of their religious duties, and their obedience to ecclesiastical authority is always exemplary. Reliable Catholics constitute the great Papal body-guard that is scattered throughout the world; they are the enduring bricks whereof the vast structure of Catholicism is built up. Like the yeomen of England, the peasant farmers of Flanders, the vine-dressers of sunny Spain, or the mountaineers of the Tyrol, they represent a type, ever

the same in every age. Less corrosive, less liable to crumble away than the stones of Chartres or Milan, they are the vital phenomena of a great philosophy of life, that once conceived can never die.

Of reliable Catholics there are half a million or more in New York, hundreds of thousands in Boston and Chicago, and not less than a few millions, men and women, throughout the United States. They are of course the backbone of the "Knights of Columbus," and the "Holy Name Society." They attend in bulk the great meetings organised to display Catholic power when Cardinals or Papal Legates arrive from over the seas. As pilgrims they flock to Ste. Anne de Beaupré in Canada and to Our Lady of Lourdes. Their money builds churches, schools, and clubs, and fattens the finances of the Vatican. When they have exhausted the sports news of the daily papers they read Catholic periodicals but not an hour would they *waste* on the pages of Acton's memoirs, or "Christianity at the Cross-roads," or "Religion without Revelation." Their pet aversions are "liberal" and "advanced" Catholics, and next in order of dislike come "Father" John Roach Stratton and Bishop Cannon, Jr.

The reliable Catholic is as I say "ever the same in every age." He survives, unchanged, the outbreaks of heresies and schisms. Scientific theories, social progress, archæological discoveries do not shake, affect or tarnish his faith. The Church might "redefine" her position, as a consequence of the onslaughts of Biblical critics or experts in the history of early Christianity, but the reliable Catholic would know nothing of what had happened. Scandals might (and do) blaze up, and

after a notable conflagration, subside in grey embers, but undisturbed the reliable Catholic slumbers on. For him, Abélard, Galileo, Giordano Bruno, Renan, Döllinger and Loisy are mere names of rebels, dishonoured insurgents who vainly assailed the authority of Peter. Should some new conflict arise, involving in the eyes of all thinking men the very destiny of Rome, there is one who would feel no distress or anxiety, one who would have no doubt about the outcome, . . . the reliable Catholic! Lastly there is one from whom the critic of the shortcomings of Catholicism may expect no sympathy, nor any tolerant appreciation for sincerity of purpose, and he again is the reliable Catholic.

In general the religion of the reliable Catholic is the logical outcome of his early training. He carries beads in his pocket; wears the scapular; sprinkles himself dutifully with "holy water" on entering or leaving the church; girds himself, not infrequently, with a "cord of St. Francis"; pins a badge of some pious association on his coat lapel, and is particularly observant about saluting his parish clergy. He is less preoccupied about the angels and devils than when he was a child, finds confession a very pesty duty, and grumbles at the monetary exactions of the Church. But he never fails to be seen at Mass on Sundays, and being in the religious sense "a regular fellow" he joins all the leagues, societies, confraternities, and clubs that are organised in his parish. He is, needless to say, the embodiment of his pastor's spiritual dream-child.

Reliable Catholics, duly organised in approved groups, are the audience to which the leaders and lecturers of the Church address themselves. They consti-

tute the sounding-board of Catholic propaganda. They are responsive, suggestible, and receptive when authorised orators make their appeals. They are easily enthused by grandiose pictures of the destiny of the Church in America . . . and they hear for instance; "America is strong; America is the land of the future, because of her immense resources and opportunities, but America must learn that her strength and her future depend on the Catholic Church. Catholicism is the cement that holds America together, and it behoves Catholics in an apostolic way to teach this to a nation so potent for good" (Fr. Lockington, S. J., at Boston). If there is war in the air they hear a call to arms. "I want to ask you," (F. X. Schwab, at Rochester, 1924, to the Knights of St. John), "with all sincerity to advance with all your power the military department of our Order. This department, I believe, is more essential now than ever. God only knows if the time is not coming when our country, as well as our Church, will have to be protected against the un-American organisation which is now becoming so strong in this country." The reliable Catholic is moved to tears of pity for himself and his co-religionists when he reads his Cardinal Gibbons: "The Catholic Church is persistently misrepresented by the most powerful vehicles of information . . . In a large portion of the press, and in pamphlets, and especially in the pulpit which should be consecrated to truth and charity, she is the victim of the foulest slanders. Upon her fair and heavenly brow her enemies put a hideous mask, and in that guise they exhibit her to the insults and the mockery of the public." Needless to say, a reliable Catholic

would not dare to suggest . . . or even think . . . that His Eminence had been wont to make things out a little worse than they really were.

The suggestibility of reliable Catholics vis-à-vis of accredited representatives of the Church renders them ready implements in the unsavoury work of religious reprisals. Though the subject is a delicate one, it must be touched upon. The history of Catholicism in this country contains many painful stories of attacks and reprisals. The attacks were nearly all based upon misunderstanding and passion; the reprisals were instigated, some of them through sordid self-interest on the part of individual Catholics but most of them through gross misconception of what religion stands for on the part of reliable Catholics. The boycottings and persecutions conducted against so-called "pervert Catholics" or "traitorous priests" or *bigots* in the name of religion by the rank and file of the Catholic population (to many instances of which every big city in America has been witness) are in themselves startling proofs of the average Catholic's lack of true Christianity. A hint from a Pastor, or the President of a Catholic Society, is all that is needed to start a devastating boycott against anyone who runs up against the cherished convictions that reliable Catholics stand for. Needless to say intolerance begets intolerance, and it is futile to expect that the American ideal of perfect religious freedom of action and opinion will be realised until the leaders, lay and clerical, of the Catholic Church in this country put a stop to all forms of reprisal against their critics, whether ex-Catholic or non-Catholic, and content

themselves with only fair and courteous controversy.

It is characteristic of reliable Catholics to be completely satisfied that their faith is securely and immovably founded in fact and reason. If tempted to question any article of religion they resist stolidly, strengthening their resistance by the consideration that to question is to doubt and that to doubt is a sin. They admit readily enough that they "do not know much about their religion" but this admission, strange to say, is made without shame or confusion and in no way deters them from engaging in argument with all and sundry who bring up difficulties against Catholicism. Reliable Catholics *feel* assured that satisfactory solutions exist of *all* apparent difficulties against their religion, even though they themselves do not know them . . . in the meantime they think it well to proffer some kind of answer whether apropos or not "in order to make the other fellow shut up." The concept of "honest doubt" does not exist in the mind of the average Catholic. For him all doubt about the faith is sinful and therefore dishonest. He has never sensed "intellectual freedom" and agrees with such writers as Fr. M. D'Arcy S. J.,[1] that, "intellectual freedom can be bought at too dear a price." And so, continues Fr. D'Arcy, "the Church tells its members sometimes to leave new theories alone because the average man is not capable of assimilating them or sifting the wheat from the chaff." Many Catholics, as it seems, submit all the more readily to this discipline of the Church because it serves as an excuse for their laziness in not fulfilling the

[1] Catholicism, p. 72, 1928.

duty of pursuing perfectly legitimate inquiries into the grounds of faith.

One of the commonest observations made by critics of the Church is that Catholics (presumably the class of which we are speaking) are priest-ridden. If by this is meant that Catholics live in constant terror and awe of their clergy, it is true only of very backward Catholic populations here and there, still to be found in the old countries. It is of course untrue of American Catholics. If, however, "priest-ridden" merely implies that Catholics are subjected to unreasonable exactions of their clergy, and are unfairly dealt with by ecclesiastics who avail themselves of the immunity from attack that their sacred position guarantees, it is perfectly true. Catholics are constrained to put up with treatment that is hard to bear from their clergy; they are often over-taxed; they are not infrequently insulted when they apply, as they have a perfect right to, for dispensations; in some places they are insulted from the altars; if they dare, as did the Catholics of Rhode Island, to cite their ecclesiastical superiors to the law courts they are excommunicated. Furthermore they are never allowed the satisfaction of having a complete and exhaustive scrutiny of Parish accounts. As we shall see later, they are in the eyes of the Church little children, who should in respect of their priests "hear naught, see naught, and say naught."

What is most trying for Catholics is that they are unable to determine the limitations of ecclesiastical authority and the nature of their own rights. As an instance, should a Catholic desire to marry a non-Catholic he knows that he must get a dispensation from

the *Ne Temere* decree, but he does not know whether or not he has the right to demand such a dispensation. He is aware that when rich and powerful folk apply in like circumstances they invariably obtain the dispensation without difficulty. But what are the poor Catholic's *rights* in the matter? If his case closely resembles that of a millionaire or a boxing-champion, who perhaps has recently been dispensed, may he cite such a case as a precedent? If he is rudely ejected from the Parochial house, how may he seek redress? Has he the *right* to insist upon redress? Or to appeal to public opinion? He has, alas! to presume *that he has no rights*, and his presumption will usually find authoritative confirmation.

It is a subject of constant amazement to non-Catholics that there should be so much loyalty to the Church among her rank and file. Non-Catholics do not (perhaps we should say cannot) make due allowance for the strength of the spiritual bond that welds a Catholic to his faith. *This bond is the miracle of Catholicism;* the triumphant mark of God's abiding presence in the Church. No one who reflects upon the matter without prejudice but must be struck by the marvel of this supernatural magnetism. No analysis of the reliable Catholic's union with the Church which ignores the transcendent factor is complete. No doubt there are purely natural factors; long association; herd-instinct; suggestions of many kinds; fears of many kinds; sentimental impulses of many kinds to be taken into account, but over and above all these, and more important than any of these, there is the mysterious, mystic bond of divine magnetism. Nevertheless the reliable

Catholic is at times confronted by some enigma of religion, that disturbs his mind. He has, for instance, a good friend a Presbyterian, John. John is a pious, God-fearing man, and holds that his religion is revealed, divine, and pure. His spiritual experiences (they have been of the most consoling kind) confirm him in his faith. He receives further confirmation of the truth of his religion in the charity and virtue and contentedness of many of his brethren. He sees nothing in Catholicism to excite his envy, and argues solidly and sincerely against Papal Infallibility and the gaudy ritual of Rome.

Our Catholic Friend is somewhat disconcerted. "Here is one," he says to himself, "who is patently honest and good-living, *who has the deepest conviction that he is in possession of the truth,* and who argues, like myself, for the divinity of his creed, on the grounds of the holiness of his Church, and his spiritual contentedness with it! How," he asks himself, "can conviction of the possession of religious truth go with false doctrine?" The puzzle is too severe a strain on our Catholic friend's store of theology so in due time he questions a priest about the matter, and receives the answer that "subjective feelings or experiences are no criterion of objective truth" . . . that . . . "the one, true Church does not rely for the proof of her divinity upon the personal experiences of her children but upon grounds that are historical, Scriptural, and so forth." With this the matter ends, and our Catholic friend *feels* that the enigma is solved, but continues as before arguing for the truth of Catholicism on the old plea that his Church is holy, and that his own experiences are super-

natural . . . a plea which, on the lips of John, is equally valid for the truth of Presbyterianism.

No religious puzzles upset for long the conscience of the reliable Catholic. A hearty hand-shake, an encouraging smile, from his pastor, and all doubts disappear. At the next meeting of "The Holy Name Society," surrounded by two or three thousand of "his own kind," he feels anew the warm consoling glow of the true faith. "Sure thing," he whispers to himself, "it is good to be a Catholic, good to live and die under the safe protection of Mother Church . . . good to belong to the Church of Christ that has survived the ages, unchanged and unchangeable; the faithful guardian of divine revelation; the home of the Saints, and of the Mother of God." And when the strains of the wonderful hymn, the *Tantum Ergo* fill the aisles, and the celebrant of Benediction in a gorgeous chasuble of cloth of gold ascends the altar to raise aloft the multi-jewelled monstrance; and when the sanctuary lights glimmer like angels' eyes through the white, rich-odoured smoke of incense, our faithful Catholic thanks God with deep sincerity for the gift of faith and bows his head saying with profound emotion, "My Lord and My God."

But *his* faith! Is it substantial? Is it the outgrowth of understanding or a mere *set of mind*, imparted in childhood and fostered by continued suggestions? Is it, in last analysis, "belief" or only "the will to believe"? Is it a faith sought out and dug up like a hidden treasure; tested in the light of much knowledge painfully acquired; examined by a freely enquiring mind,

and therefore profound and precious? Or is it just an heirloom, loved and devoutly preserved, too sacred to be weighed, measured and scrutinised, accepted as sterling for the dear love of those who passed it on?

CHAPTER V

ECCENTRIC CATHOLICS

CATHOLICISM may be likened to old wine that is incalculable in its effects. It is rich in colour, of fragrant aroma, and sweet, but its subtle quality is potent alike to depress, to stimulate, to sicken and to heal. There are some who, without being inebriated, are cheered by this old wine; others it stirs to a high pitch of enthusiasm. Some minds it clarifies, others it befuddles, and under its influence many "see things." Men if sensitive in temperament, and artistic, are liable to strange and sudden metamorphoses . . . at their peril they quaff the chalice of Catholicism. Melancholic men drink themselves into health or madness when they imbibe without restraint; and even plain practical men, who like others are allured by the glamour of a religion that can thrive as well on the banks of the Congo or the Yellow river as on the Hudson, are liable to become pseudo-mystics.

There is inherent in Catholicism an incalculable factor, for its doctrines are highly charged with spiritual tension, and both fear and emotionalism permeate its practice. Alert believing minds are taut under the strain of holding that the man-God, Christ, is in every Catholic tabernacle; that eternal torture is insufficient punishment for a stolen watch; that no Pope, however

vicious and debased, ever erred in teaching faith or morals to his flock; that when the world ends all human bodies will gather alive and well again, in the valley of Josaphat. Such is the fear of falling into sin; the pious exaltation aroused by the Church's ceremonies; the constant expectancy of supernatural manifestations that it is not to be wondered at that Catholics who devote themselves ardently to their religion should suffer from its manifold tensions and betray nervous eccentricities. As we have seen, the strain of Catholicism is already felt in childhood. A Catholic child, in pious surroundings, floats as it were between heaven and earth. The very nursery is a shrine where his mechanical toys tick to the flickering of blessed candles while the beaming smiles of pretty statues distract his attention from the friendly glances of his playmates. There have been, it is devoutly recorded, Catholic babes who on the vigils of Feasts refused, in a precocious spirit of penance, to suckle their mothers. Little boy-saints have stained their "nighties" with the blood of flagellations and have knelt for hours on cold flag-stones in prayer when they should have been asleep in their cots. As we have seen, the fears of childhood find embodiment in evil spirits lurking in the darkness. Against them the child is taught to fight, clasping tightly in his little hands his rosary-beads. In such an atmosphere of other-worldliness and spiritual traffic signals is it to be wondered at that weak nervous systems suffer excessive strain? Is it surprising that when later in life emotional crises occur various forms of "out-of-touchness" should appear?

All this will no doubt appear to many readers to be grossly exaggerated but were they to live among Catholics, and hear as a priest does intimate confidences, they would be amazed at the number of those who suffer from religious neuroses. No doubt there are to be found among the adherents of every form of creed many who are religiously eccentric and abnormal, but it is to be doubted if any creed is so prolific of eccentric folk as Catholicism. It is commonly thought that Catholicism offers varied and satisfactory avenues of relief for over-charged emotions and that in particular confession affords an excellent safety-valve for overwrought nerves. One cannot deny that Catholicism supplies safety-valves and avenues of relief but whether it be that they are not sufficiently availed of or that they are inadequate to discharge the severe spiritual strain under which Catholics labour, the fact remains that religiously eccentric Catholics abound.

When I speak of "eccentric Catholics" I do not wish to imply that such Catholics are completely unbalanced or that they are insane. The class to which I refer comprises only such as are normal in most respects, but quite distinctly peculiar in at least one respect that has a bearing on religion. As a type of this class and of what I mean, I adduce the example of a middle-aged woman who when in church flits from pew to pew, whispering abruptly and excitedly to this worshipper and that: "*Say a little prayer for me.*" Outside the church on the street, should she see one whom she thinks belongs to her own faith, she hurriedly accosts him with the same request: "*Say a little prayer for me,*"

and then as suddenly departs. In other respects, and in ordinary affairs of life this woman, a dressmaker, was quite normal, but her interpretation of the Catholic doctrine of the "Communion of Saints" evidently unhinged her mind along one definite line.

One of the commonest forms of eccentricity among Catholics is known as "scruples." Literally there are *hundreds* of scrupulous Catholics in every large parish. They suffer from a kind of religious anxiety-neurosis, a *folie de doute*, which implies a conscience tortured about freedom from sin. Some are troubled about the integrity of their confessions; some about whether or not their faith is sincere; some as to whether or not they ate or drank something before communion and were guilty of the sin of sacrilege. Always there is question of sin in one form or other . . . whether a thing is or is not a sin; whether they have or have not committed a sin.

Here, for instance, is a young man, charming in manner, handsome, clever, holding, though now with difficulty, a good position, who is longing for death because he is unable to decide what is and what is not a sin; whether he has or has not made a good confession. "Is that a mortal sin?" he asks. You answer aloud "No, it is not." He repeats his question, and you answer as before. Then he continues; "Did you say *no?*" "Yes." "Is it, or is it not a mortal sin?" "It is not." "Please answer again." "It is *not* a mortal sin." "Is it the proximate occasion of sin?" "No." "What did you say?" "It is *not* the proximate occasion of sin." "NO, to each of my questions?" "No to each of your ques-

tions." "Is that orthodox, Roman, Catholic Theology?" "Yes." "Is that true of the past, present and future?" "Yes." "So, it was neither a mortal sin, nor the proximate occasion of sin?" "It was neither." "What?" "It was neither a mortal sin, nor the proximate occasion of sin." Meanwhile the young man's voice reaches a painful pitch of tension, and sweat oozes out plentifully on his brows, and his eyes almost jump from their sockets in his anxiety to make sure that he hears aright. And when all is done . . . *all has to be repeated over and over again.* This painful struggle goes on for hours, while he vainly strives to *feel* decision and certainty within him . . . to feel that he is fulfilling his duty and making a good confession. Sometimes a scrupulous priest who may once on a time have scribbled some confessional matter on a piece of paper begins to be afraid that he has never destroyed that piece of paper. His fear of mortal sin makes him terribly concerned about all bits of paper that he may chance to find. Then he develops a painful phobia about scraps of paper and everything resembling paper. If he sees a piece of paper on the road he reasons that it may have fallen out of *his* pocket and that it may contain some confessional matter written by him . . . and . . . and . . . So he has to pick it up and carry it home, and then he finds himself in a dread quandary as to what to do with it. Should he try to burn it, it might not burn away completely and the secret might be divulged! There are innumerable forms which this religious *folie de doute* takes. Always it is a most painful malady, almost always it has its origin in some religious fear, concerning confession, communion or mor-

tal sin, and in the spiritual and nervous tension connected therewith.

"Illusionism" is very common among Catholics. Voices, prophetic warnings, miraculous interpositions, visions, and so forth are of constant occurrence. The early training of Catholics keys them up to the expectation of such things. The lips of a statue move, or seem to move so as to form a word which answers a question, or the head of the statue nods, or an "inaudible" voice is heard. Spiritual books are opened at some chance spot, and direction is accepted from the first line that is read. The direction is regarded as *supernatural.* More common still is the custom of "following the priest's advice," as though such advice were a relay of heavenly wisdom.

In every religion there is wide scope for illusionism, but nowhere are religious folk so easily imposed upon as in the Catholic Church. Not infrequently the supernatural manifests itself through the agency of children. On account of their "innocence" the manifestation is the more readily believed in. Only a few years ago, in a place where I was living, a few school children announced that they had seen shadowy "Nuns" in a *haunted* wood close by an old church. They described in detail how the "Nuns" were clothed, and how they knelt and prayed. They also affirmed that the "Nuns" spoke to them. At once there was a transportation of the sick to the hallowed spot and a few "cures" occurred. The children continued to see the "Nuns," and they followed them to the old church and heard them singing the office. The children were

taken one by one and questioned, and the accounts of what they saw tallied! The local clergy became excited and held an investigation. Finally as a test of the objectivity of the apparition, it was proposed to the children that they should demand of the "Nuns" the cure of an old woman who for thirty years had been afflicted with a cancerous growth. The children promised to make the demand, but nothing came of it; the old woman's malady remained. The priests then *ordered* the invisible visitants to depart and return no more "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Thus the matter ended.

As I write (Jan. 9, 1929), the Press publishes a report which illustrates strikingly Catholic illusionism. The story reads. "Nightly a group of devout Catholics kneel in the frozen road outside of St. Ann's Church, Carr Avenue, Keansburg, N. J. They pray softly and gaze piously at the blurred image of a woman the shadows form on the oaken door of the gloomy edifice.

"A miracle has been performed in Monmouth county, the worshippers say. It is the figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary etched on the door. . . . 'It's caused by the moonbeams slanting through the trees,' scoffed skeptics in the Carr Avenue lunch cart. They smile sadly, the worshippers, and slowly shake their heads. . . . Father Thomas Kearney, pastor of the Church, declared that two days after Christmas he was awakened in the early morning by a man who saw 'the vision.' "

That "divine healers" should abound among Catholics is not to be wondered at when we recall that character-

istic of many Catholic prayers which makes the supplicant speak as though *he* were the special object of divine care; "I am Jesus' little lamb"; "Jesus who *for me* art present on the altars," etc. The transition to a state of mind in which one considers oneself to be possessed of great influence with God, and of divine power, as a consequence, is not difficult. The self-assurance of such folk is amazing, and they often win a position of power among their co-religionists, by over-awing the latter with inspired utterances. "Divine healers" appear more frequently among the laity than among the clergy. Among nuns and lay-brothers they are also very numerous. Often they succeed in floating strange devotions, or in awakening faith among the people in some supernatural visitation for which they vouch.

Not long ago all Ireland was thrown into a turmoil over a supposed "bleeding statue," at a town called Templemore. A certain very pious young man, a typical "divine healer," publicly proclaimed that drops of blood used to ooze from a statue of the Blessed Virgin in his possession. Some pious people came to see the statue and attested the fact that fresh blood appeared on it. . . . It seemed to them that no natural explanation of the wonderful phenomenon could be given. Swiftly the news spread far and wide, and pilgrimages were organised to visit the "bleeding statue of Templemore." From all over Ireland there came in throngs, the pious, the lame, the sick. Old men and women took their little savings from banks or hiding places and travelled long journeys to see the "bleeding statue." Templemore was crowded day and night. Marvellous cures were reported. A local well became associ-

ated with the miraculous statue and water by the gallon was carried away to be drunk by those who could not themselves "do the pilgrimage." The priests and bishops did not interfere until a reaction began to set in. Then it was *discovered* that the pious young man was an epileptic. . . .

The fear of "losing one's vocation," of being unfaithful to a vocation (that is, to a *divine call* to enter religion or become a priest) is a fertile source of nerve trouble among Catholics. It must be remembered that "vocations" are very common among Catholic adolescents of both sexes, and that they are interpreted usually as being directly inspired by God. The occasion of the vocation is frequently a suggestion piously but imprudently made by a nun or priest. "My little man," a priest will say to a devout acolyte, "some day you yourself will officiate at the altar of God." The boy is tremendously impressed. "What a priest foretells will surely come to pass. What a priest says is holy," he will tell himself and from that moment onward he will dream of being a priest, and feels proud of being specially called by Christ! He hears stories of the terrible misfortunes that overtake those who neglect to follow the call of Christ. His vocation linking up with profound religious experiences becomes an emotional tender-spot in his psyche.

But later things so fall out that he changes his mind and finds himself engaged in non-clerical, non-religious pursuits. Then it often happens that an obsessional sense of remorse plagues him. He tries to rid himself of it in vain. He feels that a curse hangs over him! He

has failed to do the right thing, and God will never bless him! He begins to ask himself whether or not, even at the eleventh hour, he should set himself to study for the priesthood. Uncertainty fills his mind; uncertainty and despair. He tries to kill the "vocation idea" once and for all by marrying and making it impossible to become a priest. But even this expedient fails. What if his wife should die? Would he still be obliged to "follow his vocation?" Should he pray for his wife's death?

Only priests know how common this vocation-obsession is and what misery it may engender in married life. Sometimes a wife is worried, because she did not enter a convent. More often a husband is the victim of this obsession. Not rarely he seeks to compensate himself for his lack of priestly ordination by dressing in sombre, semi-clerical garb, associating as much as possible with priests, reading his prayers in Latin, and cultivating a clerical bearing and an unctuous tone of voice. It rejoices him exceedingly to be taken for a priest in mufti.

It is hard to give a just or adequate idea of the extent to which the various cults, pious practices and doctrines of Catholicism become, so to say, the instruments of eccentricity in the hands of devout Catholics. Some become obsessed with a craze for gaining indulgences; others for making pilgrimages (dromomaniacs); others for spreading devotion to this or that saint or the "Holy Souls"; others for making novenas or saying prayers in symbolic numbers (arithmomaniacs); others for encouraging vocations; others for seeking out and defeating the plans of supposed propagandists of im-

morality. There is no end to the number or species of religious faddists in the Church, and no small percentage of such faddists become decidedly eccentric. Not a few conceive the idea that they are destined to fulfil a special mission in life . . . the *mission* may be of any conceivable kind from overthrowing Freemasonry to having Mass said on the top of some inaccessible mountain-peak.

A case of a special mission of somewhat novel kind came to my personal knowledge. My readers will have little difficulty in guessing the nature of the unconscious motive which inspired it. The woman, who was about thirty-three years of age and unmarried, to whom the "revelation" was vouchsafed, was entirely innocent of its psychological import, and was besides of exemplary life and quite normal . . . save in this matter.

Christ, she was *told*, was to come again to purify the world and she was to be His mother. After this second coming all love would be free from blame, provided only it was sincere. The Bible which she had consulted confirmed her faith in her mission. The time was at hand, and since Christ was to be born this time in a natural way, it was her duty to find a suitable father. He should be a man of high spirituality, physically perfect, and endowed with deep faith. She had determined upon the man. He was her confessor. She had warned him of the imperativeness of the duty (and privilege) that had been conferred upon him. She was gravely disturbed by the fact that he demurred . . . and she trembled lest the divine plan should be frustrated!

Less dynamic perhaps, but more frequent, are those

"visions" and "voices" that so many pious Catholic spinsters, in and out of religion, experience. Usually it is Christ who appears to them. They are convinced of the objectivity of the apparition and find in it a rehabilitation of the "ego." Such visions and voices do not always result in outward eccentricity of religious conduct, but in the depths of their souls the visionaries are much disturbed and upset.

Once there came to me a widower, who was "troubled with voices." He was eminently sane, a competent craftsman, a kind father, and besides a most pious Catholic. There were two voices: one, in his right ear, that of his deceased wife; the other, in his left ear, the voice of his deceased father-in-law. Both voices issued from hell whither (as his wife's voice declared) they had been driven by his sins. For the man it was a supernatural manifestation, and he could not be brought to interpret it in any other light. He had his own conception of what the *cure* should be, namely "the reading of the Holy Office by a priest over him." He regarded the "voices" as a punishment inflicted on him by God for not having called in the priest sufficiently often during his wife's last illness.

When Catholics who aim seriously at progress in "the way of perfection" devote themselves (as they nearly all do!) to the practice of some "special virtue," such as humility, charity, or penance, they invariably develop eccentricities of behaviour. The Catholic who would advance in humility seeks to impress upon the minds of all with whom he comes in contact that he is "a poor, miserable sinner," quite useless, and perfectly incom-

petent to do anything meritorious. He dresses as shabbily as is permissible, yields place to everyone, is hurt unless he be allowed to enter a room last of all and to take the worst seat. He cannot keep his humility to himself . . . he is thwarted in his aims unless he be recognised as "of no account."

Those who cultivate charity make eccentric attempts to find food for admiration in everything that is said and done by others. They praise everything; all ducks are swans in their eyes; and all pygmies are giants. They put themselves forward whenever any service has to be performed; especially in connection with sick folk, whom unfortunately they often plague with over-attention. In and out of religious life, the *humble* man, the *charitable* man, and the *penitential* man, . . . namely those who are inspired by their Catholic reading to cultivate these virtues, are in general veritable "oddities," and they grow more odd the more *progress* they make in their respective virtues. As one might expect it is in monastic and convent life, where religious practices are not open to public scrutiny, and where the more delicate phases of Catholicism are developed unimpeded, that one meets with the most curious forms of eccentricity. A nun, strong in faith, but possibly a little irascible of temper, will shake her fist in St. Joseph's face (I mean, of course, in the face of his statue) should he fail to answer her prayers. An elderly monk will prowl about corridors and halls collecting pins in respect (as he believes) for the virtue of poverty. A novice will steal down at night to a chapel and climbing on altars unseen will kiss his favourite statues. A religious, through some quaint phobia about dis-

edification, will so arrange his movements that no one will ever see him entering a toilet. Sex-phobia keeps some religious from ever taking baths. It is, however, among the assiduously ascetic that eccentricity is most marked. Many such, obsessed with the fear of indulging their animal nature in any way, literally hurry through life at a half-trot, frightened and fretful in appearance, strained and "unnatural" in all they do and say.

We have seen that there are various elements in the religious training of Catholic children that lead ultimately to nerve strain and unbalanced religious behaviour, chief among these being fear of the devil, and of hell, dread of bad confessions, terror of the curse consequent on being unfaithful to a *vocation*, and hyper-sensitivity to the proximity of the supernatural. We have but touched upon a few phases, a few points here and there, sufficient perhaps to establish our thesis that the wine of Catholicity is of a kind to produce very varied, and not always healthy effects.

One point remains to be touched on very briefly. It concerns the problem of the healthfulness of the atmosphere of convents and monasteries for lay boys and girls. In the convent school, the Catholic girl is brought up in an atmosphere redolent of that kind of chastity and modesty which is peculiar to celibate women. Similarly in the Catholic college, the boys imbibe the spirit of monastic chastity.

Are nuns and monks capable of imparting to their pupils the proper, healthy outlook on sex-life? Do they carefully prepare their pupils *for the married life that lies before the majority of them?* I should say that

nuns and priests are eminently qualified to bring up children who are themselves destined for convents and monasteries, but I do not think that they are so well qualified to inspire the rest with a proper vocation for healthy marital life.

CHAPTER VI

MORTAL SIN

THE doctrine of sin is dark and mysterious. It is terrifying for Christians and unintelligible for all others. Its gist—that "in Adam all men sinned" and that as a consequence the human race was cursed, sorrow, toil, and a debased nature becoming man's destiny—is profoundly disturbing. Not even Christ's redemption availed to banish these dread consequences and until the end of time poor humans, powerless to avoid sin, must continue to tunnel piteously through foul mists of evil.

The Church strives "to impress her children with a sense of the awfulness of sin that they may fear it and avoid it." [1] She teaches that an understanding of sin serves to unite man to God more closely for "it impresses him with a salutary fear, a fear of his own powers," a fear that if left to himself he would fall from grace. She reminds the faithful that there is no refuge, no sanctuary however holy, be it even a monastic cell consecrated by the vigils of a long succession of saintly ascetes, into which sin does not find a way; no hour, though the Angelus be tolling or the Easter sun rising to call the world to worship God, but sin makes its own.

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, "Sin."

Consequent upon his fear of sin and his sense of its omnipresence, the soul of a devout Catholic is a prey to anxiety and doubt. Though he be clad in God's grace he knows not how long it will be until sin filches from him his garb of innocence. His life is a series of spells of gloom and light. If morally sensitive he despairs of ever enjoying full peace of mind, for he has no security in his possession of God's friendship. God's enmity, the consequence of sin which he knows to be inevitable, is for him, as he has learned in his catechism, "the greatest of all misfortunes."

Sin, then, is the dramatic, the tragic element in the religious life of a Catholic. It figures much in his thoughts, and his interest in the Church's teachings as to what is and what is not a "mortal sin" is exceedingly lively. "Venial sins," though they be also offences against God, concern him little, for the terrible consequence, eternal damnation, is not, according to the Church, entailed by them. But "mortal sin" . . . what horror even in the word! To die in "mortal sin"! Better never to have been born! And yet how trifling, how superficial is the distinction, when translated into terms of objective acts, between mortal and venial sins! To steal twenty-five dollars from a man of good means is mortal; to steal but a little less is "only a venial sin." To be absent from a third part of Sunday Mass, a mortal sin; to be absent for a little less, "only a venial sin." To taste a piece of meat on Friday, only a venial sin; to eat a few mouthfuls, a mortal sin with eternal damnation as a penalty! How unintelligible such mathematical interpretations of sin to the non-Christian mind! How disconcerting and unsatisfactory to the

thoughtful Catholic! In the end the legalism of Catholic moral theologians, which resembles so closely the Pharisaical legalism that Christ condemned, results as might be foreseen, in many Catholics disregarding the moral aspect of conduct and thinking chiefly of its theological aspect, namely, whether or not it is qualitatively (or numerically) "mortal sin" and as such involving danger to personal safety in a future life. Indeed a cynic might say that for the most part Catholics think of sin, not in terms of ingratitude or dishonour towards God, but in terms of insecurity as regards Hell.

Sin, as we have seen, enters at a very early age into the mind of the Catholic child, as a dark concept. As such it lingers until the moment when, on doing something naughty, he suddenly realises that he has committed a sin. That moment is pregnant of tragedy for the child . . . he has now the knowledge of good and evil. The naughty act might never have been thought of by the child as a sin were it not that he had been taught to expect the intrusion of evil into his soul. He feels himself stained and guilty. His innocence is gone for ever! The discovery of the "capacity to sin" is a psychological moment in the child's life, as definite, as fraught with epochal consequences, as the moment when later on the sense of sex breaks upon him as a reality. The child's first sin is an exciting experience. It is his initiation into the strange life of his "other self." When the excitement of the moment passes, and a feeling of shame pervades his being, his religion is put to the test for the first time, as he asks himself, "What am I to do about it?"

It is a tragedy for a child to lose his "baptismal innocence," but that he should lose it is a foregone conclusion. Very few (such is the universal opinion of theologians) pass through life without sinning mortally, and none without sinning venially every day. One cannot be surprised then that a decidedly pessimistic outlook on human morals should be common to Catholics. The ordinary Catholic listens with cynical incredulity to the story of the moral *progress* of mankind. He believes in his heart that man is morally as low and as anti-social today as he was in the nomadic period of the race. He does not look for moral betterment from education and scientific training but only from the practice of Catholicism on a larger scale. His acceptance of the Church's doctrine of sin makes him doubtful about his own ultimate destiny and that of his children . . . and should one of his little ones die, he is easily consoled knowing that it is safe from the evil influence of this wicked world. His sense of being a sinner, and in danger of damnation, makes him all the readier to submit to the stern discipline of his religion. In the Church he places all his hope of salvation.

Already I have alluded to the fact that the Church imposes her precepts menacingly, under pain of mortal sin. In so doing she has added enormously to the difficulty of salvation. Catholics envy those who are bound only by "the Ten Commandments" and who are spared the hundred and one precepts or commandments of the Church. "Why," mourns a Catholic, "should I under pain of mortal sin be bound to believe dogmas like

the Divine Procession of the Trinity or The Immaculate Conception, the reasons for which are completely beyond my grasp? Why should I under threat of damnation have to leave the writings of Voltaire or Huxley unread; to receive Communion whether I feel the desire to receive or not; to marry only a Catholic and only at the hands of a Catholic priest; to hear Mass on all Sundays and days of 'Obligation'?" When assured that the Church's commandments are *safeguards* for him, rendering his way to heaven more secure, he is mystified. He cannot see things in that light, and feeling like a jaded nag, he regards them as so many additional fences that he must clear if he is to reach the winning-post.

The effect of the menace element in the Church's laws is detrimental to the spirit of freedom in worship. Of those who hear Mass on Sundays a large proportion are simply there through fear—that is, through fear of committing a mortal sin and being damned. Some of course go freely, and would go even though there were no precept. But most are morally coerced. How can such coercion tell favourably for "the worship of God in spirit and truth"? Again, were one to ask a theologian for a speculative estimate of the number of souls damned through disobedience to the Church's precepts, he would figure out a staggering number . . . millions lost through eating meat on Fridays; millions through missing Mass on Sundays; millions through marrying without dispensations or without the approval of pastors; countless millions through neglecting their "Easter Duty"; myriads of priests damned for omitting to say their Office; myriads more for violating

the Church law of celibacy; tens of millions damned for attending unorthodox forms of worship, for reading "forbidden" books and for joining "forbidden" societies. On the conscience of the Church there seems to lie the responsibility for occasioning the damnation of a goodly number of souls and for lowering much religious worship to the ignoble status of fear-reaction.

The Church could, did she so will, completely remove the menace element that appertains to her precepts, and suffer Catholics a little of "the freedom of the children of God." But the Church still, for a while longer, clings to the mediæval spirit of legislation; death for sheep-stealing; death for witch-craft; burning at the stake for being in possession of heretical books; and so forth. Meanwhile there are multiplied soul-rending spiritual tragedies. Peter sleeps on, and hearts that should be happy break.

Is it true that tragedy follows in the wake of the Church's legislation? There are many classes of Catholics, scientists, patriots, socialists, priests, and propagandists who would answer the question in the affirmative, but let the very common-place story of an American Catholic girl suffice.

She married, impulsively perhaps, but legally, and according to the natural law *validly*, the man she loved. He proved good and true, and there were children. All went well until her Catholic conscience began to sting her. In the eyes of the Church she was a mere concubine because she had married a Protestant without a due dispensation. The curse, the ban of the Church was upon her and her children, for her husband, much

though he loved her, would not, could not face the humiliation of submitting to the Church's requirement of *marrying her again;* admitting thereby that hitherto their union had been dishonourable. From the priest to whom she went for help and comfort she received the inevitable answer. "You must not live in sin; if you do you will be damned." "But Father, my marriage was performed in a manner that the Church recognised as perfectly licit and valid only a short time ago." "It does not matter," the priest answered (and, poor fellow, had to answer!), "the Church has made it a mortal sin to marry in such a way, and furthermore teaches you infallibly that such a so-called marriage is no marriage. Your children are illegitimate, and there is no hope for you unless you take your children away and bring them up as Catholics, even though it be in poverty and sorrow." "Cruel, merciless, relentless Church," the poor girl murmurs as she departs with eternal anguish in her soul.

Were there no menace of "mortal sin" and "invalidity" in the *Ne Temere* decree such tragedies would not be occasioned. Had the decree been proposed as a mere *norm of conduct*, a guiding principle for Catholics, it would have had effect in regulating, according to the wishes of the Church, the marriages of many Catholics. Furthermore, non-Catholics anxious to marry Catholics would have been less irritated at being asked to comply with the pious wishes of Rome, were it possible to point out to them that Rome claimed no right to insist upon such a compliance. But the spirit of menace

against both parties, Catholic and non-Catholic, lies in the decree, and hence . . . tragedy and failure.

It requires some imagination on the part of non-Catholics to realise the very terrible situations that arise as a consequence of the Catholic attitude towards mortal sin. For instance, we suppose that a Catholic family are living in the country. It is the eve of some Feast and all the family have determined to receive communion together at early Mass. All go to confession and arrangements are made for all to drive together, father, mother, brothers and sisters, to Mass in the morning. But poor Tom! He is the scapegoat of the family, and all are watchful of his practice of religion. He was more or less forced to go to confession. He made *a bad confession* and knows he is in mortal sin and that it will be sacrilegious for him to receive communion in such a state. He is unable to screw up the courage to slip out again and go to confession once more. All night he lies awake, in utter misery. What is he to do? He will surely be damned if he makes a bad communion! The horror, the terror of it! He promises himself that in the morning he will pretend to be sick. Then it occurs to him that no one will believe him. If he refuses to go to communion the family will be miserable, knowing that he has some sin on his conscience. In the morning Tom smothers his conscience and *makes a bad communion!*

In a country parish again, there dwells a pastor with his curate. The pastor is in sin, but must say Mass in

the morning, and it is sacrilege to do so in a state of sin. He cannot confess to his curate; it would be too shameful an ordeal. He could still hire a car and drive to the house of another priest who lives a long distance away, but the night is cold and his parishioners would notice his departure. Misery of soul, doubt, and despondency overtake him! He gets out a volume on Moral Theology to see whether or not he can avail himself of some lenient interpretation of the law that rules such cases. Finally, he rationalises, "forms his conscience," and determines to say Mass in the morning, but feels exceedingly miserable about it. He is caught in the toils of sin that ecclesiastical law weaves for priests.

A Catholic in a thunder storm, or sailing on a rough sea, or climbing a dangerous precipice, or choking from the effects of swallowing a fish-bone, or inhaling gas in a dentist's chair—if a mortal sin burdens his conscience—is as wretchedly unhappy as a human can be. "O God, have mercy on me! Spare me this time! I will never sin again!" he cries. But when the crisis is past he quickly forgets his period of anguish. As often as not such experiences bring no moral improvement in their train.

The view that sin should be reinterpreted in terms of maladjustment makes no impression upon Catholics. For them sin is a spiritual entity, a something evil that God alone can wash away. It is true that some Catholics are intrigued by the theory of unconscious impulses at work when men perjure themselves or yield to lust, and they are ready to admit the possibility

of such impulses mitigating freedom and responsibility. But in their own cases they make sure to have recourse to confession and are little inclined "to risk losing their souls" for the sake of a psychological theory.

The meddlesomeness of fashionable preachers is a source of trouble to the laity. To stir up a mild sensation, a preacher of this class will launch out into a fierce denunciation of some modern practice, some new dance or amusement, some new form of pastime. He will describe *awful consequences* and adduce lurid instances. He will address himself to parents and appeal to them in the name of the faith that they love and cherish, in the name of the Angels who guard the virtue of children, never to allow their little ones to enter unprotected such devil-haunted purlieus.

After his sermon there will be excited discussion, and nervous parents will agree that he is quite right and will hasten to confession to inquire if they are in sin on account of their gross neglect as regards the moral care of their children. They will ask their Confessors if it is a mortal sin to allow their children to enter the places he condemned. They will inquire as to the age at which children may with safety be allowed to enter them. The fashionable preacher has thus secured great publicity for himself, at the cost of upsetting the consciences of many. His teaching is sure to be upheld by the other would-be fashionable preachers. Years will pass before his nonsensical doctrine is finally killed off by ridicule, but by that time he will be ready to float some other "new sin."

All sins are not presented to Catholics in the same

light . . . and in this one finds an enigma of Catholicism. Although "envy" and "sloth" are numbered among the "seven deadly sins," one never hears mention of them from the pulpit. The two carnal sins, "gluttony" and "lust," [1] come in for the fullest and most frequent treatment. The greatest emphasis is laid upon lust, and it is implied that the "sins of the flesh" are in the sight of God the most odious of all sins.

In curious contrast to the attitude of confessors and theologians in respect of lust, we have their attitude in respect of drunkenness. The greatest latitude is allowed in regard to this sin. So indulgent are theologians that they so define drunkenness that it becomes almost impossible for anyone to commit a mortal sin thereby. To be "theologically" drunk one must be so far besotted as to be utterly unable to use one's mind—and unable to recognise one's right hand from one's left. While a sensual glance at a girl's ankle, deliberately indulged, constitutes a mortal sin of impurity according to Jesuit moralists, the imbibing of several quarts of whiskey, and the utter befuddling of the mind, is only a "venial" sin of drunkenness.

The fear of sin, as might be expected, plays no small part in determining the lives of Catholics. To escape from the sinful world is still, as it was in the fourth century of Christianity, and all through the Middle Ages, a powerful dynamic in Catholicism. Monasteries and Convents are more numerous than ever, and even

[1] George Russell (A. E.) discussing the Censorship Bill of the Irish Free State wrote: "Sexual Sins are almost the only ones seriously regarded by our (Catholic) moralists. Men may perjure themselves, rob or commit murder, and these are but venial acts in comparison with any violation of the sex tabus." (*Literary Digest,* Feb. 2, 1929.)

those who cannot afford to spend their lives in the cloister seek to pass at least a few days, now and again, "on retreat" in a religious house. In spite of its contrariety to modern philosophy and practice, Catholics still hold it wise to fly from sin; to avoid temptation; to distrust profoundly their personal powers of resistance. Sin is a plague, infectious, and contagious, in the eyes of devout Catholics, and the surest remedy is found in flight. "Fly for your life," they whisper to such as enter the hinterland of sin. "Do not linger an instant. Take refuge in prayer in some holy place. He that loveth danger shall perish therein."

The difficulty of "avoiding the occasion of sin" is increased enormously by such modern inventions as the *radio*. The radio now brings *temptation* to the most Catholic fireside—*temptation*, for instance, to hear heretical teachings, as contained in sermons by celebrated Protestant preachers. How much listening of this sort can the faithful Catholic indulge in without placing his soul in peril? In an attempt to answer the question the Rev. Dr. Collins of Overbrook Seminary, Philadelphia, has contributed four tentative rules of conduct: (1) To listen to heretical sermons on the radio when one is conscious that his faith is being endangered thereby, is sinful and forbidden. (2) To listen occasionally, out of curiosity, when there is no danger to faith, is no sin, and unless definitely forbidden by the bishop or the Holy See may be allowed. (3) To listen frequently or to follow closely the sermons of a particular sect or preacher implies that there is danger to the faith, and this practice should be forbidden. (4) To listen to heretical sermons in the presence of children, or

of adults whose faith is notoriously weak, should be forbidden on the ground of scandal, for which there is no corresponding sufficient reason. Commenting upon these rules the *Christian Century* remarks: "They exhibit, better than hours of other exposition could, the difficulties in which a religion of objective authority finds itself in the modern world." [1]

[1] *The Christian Century* Jan. 17, 1927.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONFESSIONAL

BEHIND the cohesion and the discipline of the Catholic Church there stands Confession, and the haunting consciousness in the mind of every Catholic that unless he confesses his sins he cannot be saved. More stress is laid on confession in the religious instructions given to the faithful than on any other sacrament, and it is no exaggeration to say that every sermon delivered from Catholic pulpits contains at least implicitly the message, "Confess your sins." The crucial test of religious observance among Catholics is the frequenting of the confessional, and the seal of success in an apostolic venture is the bringing of a sinner to his knees before a priest. The Catholic mother who spends her days and nights in prayer for her wayward son finds her prayers answered when her son "goes to confession." Then her heart is brimful of joy. Or, if her husband, after a life of selfishness and vice, consents to have the priest come to his deathbed, she forgives and forgets all in her gladness, and loves him again with all the fervour of early days.

Those who visualise confession in colours, and with sympathy, see a sinner, broken and despondent, entering a Catholic sanctuary with faltering steps to unburden his soul to a wise and kindly priest, who is

vowed to secrecy and eager to bestow the balm of encouragement. They find much beauty and pathos and holiness in the scene. The priest, his face averted, listens with solicitude. The sinner, with bowed head, reveals the troubles of his anguished heart and finds hope and comfort in so doing. Presently the priest raises his hand to bestow absolution, and tears of joy fill the penitent's eyes. He feels an inexpressible lightness of heart, and goes forth to face life with new courage. His step is firm as he leaves the church, and he murmurs to himself, "That man is a saint, God bless him."

Such a poetic vision of confession, though not without truth, is a very incomplete picture, and is calculated to convey an inaccurate conception of confession. It affords no insight into the mental attitude of the penitent toward confession, or into the nature of the struggle he has to undergo, nor does it give any inkling as to the attitude of the Church toward the sinner, or the means she employs in bringing him to his knees. Nor does such a picture do full justice to the dramatic nature of confession, with all its interwoven elements of hazard, peril, and romance. There is something in confession, as we shall see, of a lone adventure; a wounded man fighting, single-handed, a desperate battle against fearsome intangible shadows; a crusader struggling for his spiritual survival, not on the fields of Palestine, but in a dark wooden box; not in a saddle, sword in hand, but on his knees, clutching a crucifix. There is something in it of a last stand on a perilous edge, where a false step means eternal death. Confes-

sion, in fine, is a short intense drama on which momentous issues hang.

The presence of drama in Catholic ritual has received universal recognition, and the skill displayed by the Catholic Church in dramatising her most sacred ceremonies has awakened the envy of dignitaries of many other religious affiliations. If we take the Mass as an instance of the Church's power of dramatisation, we find that she has converted the very simple "breaking of bread," as instituted by Christ, into an elaborate and impressive ceremony. The priest, attired in colourful, symbolic garb, slowly and solemnly ascends the altar. Hither and thither he moves, genuflecting, bowing, and performing many picturesque rites. He recites and reads sublime prayers in tones of voice carefully modulated to three keys. He is waited upon by acolytes in red or black with pretty surplices. As the drama approaches its crisis in the "consecration," the solemn hush is suddenly broken by the ringing of bells thrice three times. The host is raised aloft, and after it the chalice, which glints mysteriously in the dim light of wax candles. In it all there is unity, cohesion, and movement, and when the dénouement subsides into the *ite missa est* ("go, Mass is over"), those present *feel* that a great and sacred mystery play has been enacted.

In confession we find even more striking proof of the dramatic instinct of the Church. Unlike the Mass, however, it is staged behind curtains and in strict privacy. It is a drama of a more personal nature, less ceremonial than psychological. To understand fully its atmosphere one must bear in mind the mentality of the

believing Catholic, for whom the Church is infallible and supreme in authority.

A Catholic who has sinned grievously, who has, that is, committed a "mortal sin," finds himself faced with the situation that develops into the drama of confession. His sense of guilt, thanks to his religious training, is acute, and it is accentuated by the fear of death in sin. But it is with mixed feelings that he contemplates the task of confessing his sin. Fear and shame make him shrink from confession. He finds himself in a wretched and tragic situation. If he does not confess he remains in guilt and danger. If he does confess—the torture of revealing his sin! The questions and reprimands of the priest!

Other anxieties disturb him. What if his courage should fail him on entering the confessional and he should conceal his sin? Then his confession would be "bad" and he would be in a ten times worse case than before. He would have added sacrilege to his sin. Or if his sorrow should be insufficient, or his purpose of amendment insincere? Again the confession would be "bad," and would have to be remade. He asks himself if it is wise for him to make the attempt, to take the risk of confession, seeing that he feels so doubtful of his courage. But he is caught in a painful dilemma. Even though he wishes to postpone his confession, he is not free to do so. He is under the obligation to confess his sins as soon as he conveniently can.

And the Church fixes an absolute time limit. He must at very latest confess at Easter. Beyond Easter he cannot procrastinate without incurring excommunication. The Church, therefore, forces upon him the life-and-

death venture of confession. With menacing finger the Church commands him, weakling though he be, to go forth to the battle. In that menace lies the hidden pulse of the drama of confession. The Church is reckless as was Abraham of the life of Isaac. She takes the sinner and throws him headlong into the spiritual vortex of confession, to sink or swim, to survive or to be lost. What maternal solicitude could be more daring, drastic, or dramatic?

Could the penitent bide his time until some strong emotional impulse carried him through the ordeal of confession, or until an easy confessor in some strange place could be found, it would not be so bad. But unless such an emotion awakens within the time limit set by the Church, or unless the convenient circumstances that he desires present themselves opportunely, he is seized by the Church and driven forth to play his part in the perilous adventure.

The day at length arrives, a Saturday evening very probably, when he makes his way to the church, nervous and depressed, hoping against hope that all will go well, and praying for the grace to make a good confession. When he enters the church he first of all takes a place in a pew, and kneeling down makes his immediate preparation.

Saturday evening is for Catholics the favourite time for confessing their sins, and confessionals, which are usually hidden away in the church aisles, are much frequented on that evening. Outside each confessional folk await their turn to enter. A kind of panting silence pervades the church. Penitents move about noiselessly as though desirous of escaping observation. One hears,

however, an ominous "click, click" as slides are drawn to or fro in the various confessionals, marking the beginnings and the endings of confessions. From some confessionals the ominous sound comes more frequently than from others. They are the confessionals where popular, broad-minded priests are located. The popular priest is usually more expeditious than the others, for he knows that there are many waiting outside his "box" to be heard. He has not to draw out his work to make it last. Other confessors who have few penitents waiting outside their "boxes" are slower. Sometimes they make up for the infrequency of the clicks that issue from their confessionals by the noisiness with which they bang their slides. They are, perhaps, desirous that the other confessors should hear the clicking from their "boxes" and should form the idea that they, too, are kept busy.

For those who are waiting their turn to enter the confessional the clicking is disturbing, almost terrifying. It means for them that the ordeal is fast approaching. They hasten to go over their sins once again in their minds, in order to be sure that they remember the precise words they have chosen wherewith to confess them. Much depends on having a suitable "formula." Without it confession might be too hard, and they might in their shame and weakness conceal their sins. What an agony of mind should they find that they have indeed forgotten the "formula" determined on! To confess sins in plain Biblical terms demands far more courage than average penitents possess. They cannot, for instance, get themselves to employ the words "steal"

or "calumny" or "adultery." They prefer soft circumlocutions. "There was something, Father, it wasn't *very* valuable, but it didn't belong to me. I shouldn't have taken it, of course, but the person who owned it didn't seem to need it." Thus the thief avoids using the word "stole." Or again: "There was a married man, Father, and I'm afraid I allowed myself to get a bit fond of him. But he was very persistent, and one evening when we all had taken a glass of wine, I wasn't so well able to mind myself against him. But I'll keep to myself in future, Father." What woman can employ the plain Biblical term, "adultery," when telling her sin? However, in the eyes of Catholic theologians it is not necessary to do so. Soft formulas suffice for the *integrity* of confession.

Much of a confessor's work is pure routine. He listens, asks no questions, proffers no advice, imposes a penance and absolves, dismissing the penitent with a blessing. But routine is frequently interrupted by the presentation of difficult problems in morals, the recitation of heartrending stories of sin or sorrow, or perhaps by some unexpected humorous occurrence. Sometimes a little child, escaping from his parents, will follow the example of his elders, and toddle into the confessional, and when the priest draws back the slide will look up smilingly at him. The child is there to play a game of "hide and seek," and he counts on the priest for a playmate. Again a little boy will enter to make his first confession, having been carefully trained by the nuns, and told what sins to confess, but so nervous that he mixes up his prayers and formulas. At the end

of confession, instead of asking pardon "for these and all his other sins," he will perhaps ask pardon "for these and all his mother's sins."

The confessional, resembles a telephone booth in structure, save that in the place of the telephone instrument there is a wire netting in the wall through which the penitent addresses the priest. Like the telephone booth, it is the playhouse for short dramas of the most intense and varied kind. Dramas that swiftly ascend to consummations at times felicitous, but often very tragic. No city telephone booth vibrates to as many heart-throbs, or hushes so many dread secrets, as the confessional. "My child," the priest whispers to a girl, "you must never see him or speak to him again. If you do you will be ruined." An audible sigh follows an "Oh! my God," and sorrow and despair settle in the girl's heart. "My friend"—the priest is now speaking to a business man—"what you are doing is absolutely unjust. You must put an end to the practice at once." With a dry "Thank you, Father," the business man quits the confessional, to face either serious financial loss or painful efforts to stifle a troubled conscience. Whether or not the confessional be a sacred ledge between this world and the supernatural, it is certainly the scene of profound emotional reactions.

When the penitent enters the confessional he finds himself as it were imprisoned in a dark narrow space. Whatever fear or shame he feels is increased in measure according to the time he has to wait before the slide is drawn and the face of the priest appears in vague outline through the grating. The drawing back of the slide marks the opening of the drama. No sooner has

confession begun than the penitent is subconsciously aware of an element of urgency. He senses the pressure of time. At most a brief period is at his disposal. Issues that are for him momentous must be decided speedily. Others are waiting outside, and if the duration of his confession notably exceeds what is usual, there will be audible and embarrassing sounds of impatience from without: coughs, perhaps, and the stirring of feet. Unless the priest be very calm and tranquil (and few priests are sufficiently so) the penitent will feel hurried. And such is the agony of mind of some penitents that this feeling of being hurried gives birth to a mood of despair. "I'm done for now," they say to themselves, "I absolutely can't make a good confession!"

It is, however, the ritual of confession that more than anything else increases the tension in the penitent. There are so many things to be attended to. Sins must be confessed audibly and intelligibly, according to number and species. Sorrow of a certain degree, called "attrition," must be felt for all of them. The will must be stirred to a sincere purpose of amendment. In addition the priest's commands, and the penance he imposes, must be noted and remembered. If the priest questions the penitent overmuch or tactlessly, the latter is upset, sometimes to such an extent that he forgets what he had meant to say or to inquire about. Meanwhile in the penitent's mind there is a sudden uprush of anxieties. Has the priest heard and understood? Is he competent to give an authoritative solution of the problem presented? Is he a man of self-control, or is he about to fly into a temper?

In the law courts, if a judge loses self-control or

through ignorance gives a decision at variance with the law, there is always a possibility of redress. The bad work can be undone. But the evil that an ignorant or ill-tempered priest may do in confession is not often capable of redress or remedy. Many nervous systems have been lastingly hurt by ill-tempered and incapable confessors. No clumsy psychoanalyst is ever in the position to jar and jag nervous systems to the same degree as priests. For the priest's authority is exercised over penitents at the precise moment when they are strung to the highest pitch of emotional tension.

There is no end to the variety of anxieties that assail penitents at the moment of absolution. Doubts of all kinds, which pious ascetical writers attribute to the agency of the devil, trouble them. What of past confessions? Were they all good? Should they be repeated now for safety's sake? Is it not better to make sure and to make a "general" confession covering every sin ever committed? For the penitent knows that if even one of his past confessions was badly made, the present one would be sacrilegious. The crisis of the drama is reached when at last the penitent has struggled through his part, and winds up with a subdued, "That's all, Father." Exposed and humiliated, he lies at the mercy of the priest, the very nakedness of his soul making piteous appeal for consideration and forbearance. At that instant his fate hangs in the balance. If absolution is refused or postponed he may never again have the courage to tear the bandage of secrecy from his spiritual wounds. One harsh word may freeze his soul for ever into sullen rebellion against confession. A coarse question may transmute his docility into a sud-

den outburst of anger, and he may quit the confessional, as many do, unabsolved, and never to enter it again. At such a moment of extreme tension, when the mystery and awesomeness of religion pervades the atmosphere, and when the ego is anguished in its shame of self-revelation, very little separates the penitent from a tragic collapse.

The priest may be a bumptious young man just out of the seminary, who has neither lived nor suffered, cocksure of himself, and prone to strut where "angels fear to tread." The penitent at his feet may be a woman of exquisite refinement and delicate sensitivity, whom an impertinent question might hurt irreparably. The Church takes the risk of such mishaps and bids the woman see and hear Christ in the priest. Or the priest may be a man whose evil life is widely talked of, whose coarseness may be known to the penitent, and yet she must unveil to him her maidenly fears and self-reproaches, in the belief that his words of absolution will be valid.

When the crisis of the drama is past and the priest has decided to absolve, with the words, "say for your penance," he imposes as punishment the recital of certain prayers, and utters next the formula of absolution.

One cannot wonder that the penitent, after so trying an ordeal, after living through so intense a drama, should experience an emotional reaction of no ordinary kind. A thrill of joy surges through his soul. Peace has returned, and the sense of recovered innocence. Lovingly, even passionately, he kisses the crucifix hung in the confessional as the slide is drawn back to mark the end of confession.

Turning now to the question of the effect of confession on the penitent, we are met by the claim voiced by many both within and without the Catholic Church that confession affords an admirable mode of release that the human heart when in trouble craves. "How many souls are there in distress, anxiety, and loneliness," wrote Cardinal Newman, "whose one need is to find a being to whom they can pour out their feelings unheard by the world. They want to tell them and not to tell them; they wish to tell them to one who is strong enough to hear them, and yet not too strong so as to despise them." Implicitly the great Cardinal hereby claims for confession the rôle of supplying a deep-seated natural need, the need of minds in trouble to reveal their grief. This claim, formulated in a more modern way, is said to have been admitted by the psychologist Jung, to whom is attributed the remark: "Catholics have no need of psychoanalysis because they have confession."

Is it true that confession, drama though it be, affords a healthful discharge for pent-up emotional troubles? Does confession supply Catholics with a safety valve which secures them against nervous breakdowns? Are Catholics saner and less abnormal than those affiliated to other religious tenets, on account of having confession? Such questions are naturally provoked by the claims made on behalf of confession.

The present writer has had considerable personal experience of Catholic confession. A thousand times or more he has confessed his own sins. He has heard, as a priest, the confessions of thousands of Catholics. Furthermore, he has been consulted, outside confession, by many Catholics whose analyses disclosed the fact that

their mental health had suffered as a consequence of confession. He has had, therefore, the unique opportunity of studying confession from three angles: that of the penitent, that of the confessor, and that of the analyst. Relying on his experience, the writer is inclined to dissent from the view that confession, as a general rule, affords a healthy mode of self-revelation such as psychologists desiderate. It is too fragmentary, too artificial, and too coercive in character to be a health-giving mode of release. Legislation has dehumanised confession, and made it, for perhaps the majority of Catholics, a burden rather than a source of comfort. And the proof that it does not protect Catholics from nervous troubles lies in the undeniable fact that Catholics to the same extent as others suffer from neuroses. And among nervous Catholics both priests and nuns are found in due proportion.

The "fragmentary" nature of confession results from the custom, encouraged by the Church, of confessing isolated sins. A Catholic, when he commits a grievous sin, is supposed to hasten to confess *it* to the priest without connecting it in any way with the complexus of his life. For this reason confession, as compared with analysis, is lacking in complete self-revelation, and does not conduce much to a thorough self-understanding, or "auto-gnosis."

Whether Catholics feel the need of confessing or not, they are bound by Church law to confess at least once a year, and much pressure is brought to bear on them to confess every week, or at least every month. It is not a question with Catholics of satisfying a deeply felt need at a time and in a manner that appeals to them.

The Church arranges for the time, place, and precise manner of confession, and leaves little to natural impulse or inclination. The ritual or technique, as we have seen, is by no means simple, and there are dogmatic teachings as to what sins must be confessed and as to how they must be confessed. There are also conditions imposed in the case of certain sins which make it very arduous and humiliating to secure absolution. In fine, so exacting is the ritual of confession that Catholics are often disturbed rather than comforted by even "good" confessions. And it is likely that many Catholics pass through life without ever experiencing that kind of satisfaction in confession which to outsiders it seems calculated to afford.

One aspect of what I am venturing to call the artificiality of confession should perhaps be referred to. It touches on a point where confession diverges from what nature lays claim to, and where the penitent is, as it were, balked of the kind of comfort he seeks.

It often happens that the thing which is of serious consequence to the penitent, and about which dwells the penitent's most profound anguish, is not subject matter, in the theological sense, for confession, and confessors will point out to the penitent that the confessional is not the place for discussing such matters. A mother—to take one case from my experience—who had a few years previously drowned her infant child yearned to confess it all over again, although she had already been absolved. *She was vainly seeking in confession the secret of oblivion.* If only she could forget it all! Forgiveness of her sin had not brought her any comfort, nor were her thoughts concerned with the

sinfulness of what she had done. She was consumed with a tragic self-pity. Confession, from the dogmatic standpoint, is not created to deal with cases such as hers. On another occasion I remember hearing the confession of a girl who had gone very far astray. She confessed her sins in so far as it was theologically necessary to confess them, but when I told her that that was sufficient and that there was no need to go into detail, she seemed much upset. Her heart felt the need of "telling all" as she understood it, and unless she "told all" it was obvious she would be dissatisfied.

At precisely this point the doctrine and practice of confession conflicts with what human nature requires. A confessor is taught that he must not allow unnecessary details to be described. But unless penitents who feel the need of describing details are suffered to do so, they are balked of the comfort they seek. My efforts to reassure this girl failed, and finally I had to show her by a word that I guessed what was troubling her, and then only was she content. Not till then did "spiritual joy" fill her soul.

There are certain classes of Catholics who are disimproved by confession. Those who suffer from an inferiority complex, and who have constant recourse to confession, intensify their feeling of worthlessness and their expectation of failure in all their undertakings. Instead of depending on themselves, they come to lean more and more on their confessor, and they have recourse to him in every trivial trouble. They soon belong to the "clinging" type of men and women, and their moral fibre deteriorates. And yet there are confessors

who encourage them to come often to confession, and who apparently enjoy being clung to!

One sees evidence of the classical types of abnormality in the manner in which penitents confess. Some develop spiritual "arithmomania" and insist on putting exact numbers on everything. Others show signs of masochism in the extravagant manner in which they depict their own wickedness. Echolaliacs abound, who repeat *ad nauseam* everything again and again; but the most common and most serious form of abnormality connected with confession is a form of anxiety neurosis called by confessors, "scruples."

It should not be concluded from what I have said as to the ill effects of confession on some temperaments that confession is uniformly unhealthy. I know of no evidence to warrant such a conclusion. Many Catholics are consoled and calmed by confession, and find in it not only supernatural but natural satisfaction. The extent to which my criticism goes is to indicate that confession, owing to its fragmentary, artificial, and coercive character, cannot be regarded as a satisfactory mode of self-revelation for those in trouble, and furthermore that it does positive harm to certain types of men and women, notably those who suffer from an inferiority complex or who are liable to develop "anxiety neurosis."

CHAPTER VIII

HELL'S WANING PRESTIGE

SOMEWHERE in the mind of every Catholic there is to be found the thought of hell embedded in a complex of fears and *doubts*. The doubts, as regards hell, are a new feature of the Catholic mind, due to the insensible influence of generations of caustic criticism of the old-time fundamentalist notion "of the pool burning with fire and brimstone" in which *all* liars, besides sorcerers and others, "have their portion." The teachings of the Fathers had to be scrapped as regards the location of hell, and subsequently as regards realistic details. The doctrine of Chrysostom that "God showed also mercy to us when He created hell' no longer holds its own among Catholics—still less does the atrocious doctrine of Aquinas, according to which the joys of the saved are enhanced by the contemplation of the tortures of the damned.

It is not, of course, our purpose to discuss the *pros* or *cons* of the doctrine of hell, nor to enlarge on the irrevocably fixed rejection of the idea of a God of vengeance by modern religious thinkers. We propose simply to analyse the peculiar present-day attitude of the Catholic mind in respect of hell.

From time to time the average Catholic professes his belief in hell, but having satisfied his conscience by so doing he proceeds to *forget about it*. Naturally

he finds the thought too depressing to dwell upon and instinctively he has recourse to the mechanism of repression. He has had no success in efforts, which perchance at times of religious fervour he has made, to adjust himself to the doctrine. He finds he cannot bear to think of himself as damned for all eternity, nor even to think of himself as liable to such a fate. Hardly less impossible is it for him to find an adjustment to the notion of his dear ones being eternally tortured. Instinctively his mind revolts against the doctrine and it is only by shutting his eyes, as it were, and compelling his intellect to think obediently and submissively along the lines of the Church's teachings that he is able to screw himself into a sullen, tardy "belief in hell."

We have then the strange spectacle of the average Catholic bearing with a doctrine for sake of his loyalty to Mother Church, which if he fully understood and realised would most probably drive him insane. We see him professing belief in a doctrine that, through his self-preservation instinct, he *must* forget or blanket with clouds of doubt. We see him, through some mode or other of rationalisation, searching for a way of escape from the obvious implications of the doctrine. And meanwhile, strangest enigma of all, we behold the Church regarding with complacency the unwillingness of her children to admit the significance of the dogma of hell.

The Church is well aware that were this dogma fully realised there would no longer be any marriage or giving in marriage. Normal life would come to a standstill. In multitudes men and women would fly into the desert, preferring to die of starvation than by remain-

ing in the world to risk the loss of their souls. The Church is fully satisfied and indeed prefers that hell should not be thoroughly understood, or taken too seriously, otherwise her children would be as impecunious and difficult to manage as Peter the Hermit or St. Jerome. Were the dogma of hell received otherwise than it is, namely, otherwise than with a mixture of fear, incomprehension, and indifference, her schools and chapels would be empty, bishops would be clothed in rags, and the Pope himself would have to beg for bread along the deserted streets of Rome.

It is a common experience for a priest to hear from the lips of an edifying Catholic: "You know, Father, I simply can't believe in hell. I can't imagine that a good God would punish any of his creatures so severely." And as often as not there follows the curious question: "Do you believe in hell, Father?" How interesting it would be to tabulate and analyse the answers priests give on such occasions! How cautiously they reply! The soft, evasive words they use so as not to frighten, not to distress, not to horrify! Always they have some "escape theory" to suggest, some *explanation* which amounts to a softening down of the dire doctrine of the Fathers.

To the honest-minded it is also significant that hell in its full rigour is not preached, and *cannot* be preached, to women and children. The reason is sufficiently obvious. To preach a *hundred per cent* hell-sermon to women and children would result in an outbreak of hysteria. Hell was created equally for men, women and

children, according to Catholic doctrine, but the latter must not be allowed to hear too much about it! Yet it is not women and children alone who are spared the terrors of hell-sermons. It is understood that such sermons are not to be preached to fashionable congregations. At most indirect reminders about the "four last things" are dropped. But lurid descriptions of what eternal tortures mean, and how inevitable is the judgment of God upon those who die in mortal sin—such things are not heard where rich and delicately nurtured Catholics throng. Nowhere, be it added, is hell preached to the degree that its importance in the economy of religious ideas demands.

In spite, however, of the fairly obvious fact that the Church is content that the faithful should accord to the hell dogma only a dull, phlegmatic, indefinite kind of belief, the Church would not dream of modifying by one iota that dogma. Were a responsible commission of the Holy Office to be set up tomorrow with the express purpose of investigating the history of the Church's teaching in respect to hell, and of determining whether or not it should be accounted an article of divine faith, there is not the slightest doubt but that the commission would decide in favour of the *hundred per cent* fundamentalist hell. New "proofs" would be adduced; the dogma would perhaps be redefined in more precise and stringent terms; but not the slightest modification of the doctrine would be allowed. The Church stands or falls by this dogma and she is irrevocably pledged to it till the end of time. The slightest

wavering on her part would entail colossal trouble. It is through the hard and fast doctrine of hell that the Church holds her children in secure and permanent subjection.

By far the most interesting feature of the Catholic attitude in regard to hell is the variety of "interpretations" put upon the dogma by amateur theologians, (and indeed by professional theologians too, though mostly *sub rosa*). If the interpretations attract too much notice, as did that of the English Catholic scientist, Mivart, the Holy See steps in and bans them. Mivart put his hopes in there being a gradual lessening of the pains that the damned souls suffer . . . a point being finally reached where pain ceases and a form of negative happiness commences. Some of the early Fathers, much to the annoyance of Aquinas who condemned their view, taught that on great *Feasts* a temporary cessation of the pains of the damned was allowed by God. Others held that through the prayers of the saints God sometimes grants a respite from suffering.

Turning now to "interpretations" current among Catholics we find a great variety, all of which, needless to say, open a way to the much desired conclusion: "Therefore I shall escape hell." Some Catholics hold that mortal sin is so rare that the ordinary Catholic never commits it, and that as a consequence hell is not a practical consideration for the ordinary Catholic. This view appears to some amateur theologians quite orthodox. The present writer for one would be loth

to disabuse them of such an assumption, seeing that from it they derive comfort for their souls and an assuaging of their fears concerning hell.

Another school of thought leans to the view that actually there are very few in hell; that it is impossible to say for certain that even Judas is in hell. How it comes about that hell is more or less unoccupied they do not know, but they understand that through the instrumentality of grace at the last moment even sinners are saved. They quote:

> "Between the saddle and the ground,
> He mercy sought and mercy found."

Hell therefore is disposed of by this school (also in an apparently orthodox manner!) by figuring that its gates are very narrow, narrow as "the eye of a needle." [1]

We come now to those who rely on pious revelations of various kinds. First in order we have the common belief of Jesuits, a belief which has to do with their own personal safety and not with that of the general body of the faithful, the *profanum volgus*. In respect to the latter's chances of salvation the Jesuits as a rule are not very optimistic. They tell them roundly that there is a good hot hell awaiting all who die in sin. But Jesuits are far less pessimistic as concerns their own safety. They have been assured by pious revelation that "all who die in the Society of Jesus will be saved." Such is the manner in which the fearless sons

[1] It is fairly common among American Catholics to hold (contrary to Church doctrine) that hell-fire is not *really real!* They quote priests as saying that *"hell is nothing more than the loss of the privilege of the Vision of God!"* Many priests do say and teach such things, and in so doing they recede from orthodox Catholic doctrine.

of the Soldier-saint Ignatius escape from unpalatable preoccupations about eternal torture.

Next in order come "escape theories" founded upon devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Of these there are many, notably one which ensures salvation to such as die with an arm in the sleeve of the "brown habit," a garment which is worn by clients of "Our Lady of Carmel." Innumerable Catholics keep a "brown habit" in readiness when they are ill, and if they become seriously ill the "habit" is laid on the bed beside them so that they can partly slip it on should they grow worse. Some Catholics hold that no devout client of the Blessed Virgin can be lost, and stories without end are circulated which record marvellous death-bed repentances of sinners, who in spite of their crimes maintained during life the practice of some little act of homage to Mary.

The devotion of "The Nine First Fridays" to which we allude elsewhere is another "escape theory," for it guarantees salvation to all who on each one of nine consecutive Fridays receives communion worthily in honour of the Sacred Heart. Catholics who hold these or such-like theories *in effect refuse to accept the possibility of damnation for themselves.* They are in no way to be blamed for such an attitude of mind. It seems indeed, as we stated above, a psychological impossibility to adjust one's mind to the idea of being eternally tortured. It is inevitable that folk should devise "escapes" from a dogma which teaches that there is no child of Adam but is liable to be damned to hell.

With more humour than theology the people of Ireland foster the tradition that the children of Erin are

to be judged by Saint Patrick on the "last day." They hold that their patron Saint in his long vigil on "Croagh Patrick" besought God with many tears and prayers that he would confer on him this privilege, and his request was finally granted. The tradition, for those who take it seriously, is not a little consoling, for if Patrick is to be the judge of the Irish race, what good Irishman need fear damnation?

Lest it be thought that in this matter I misrepresent current Catholic thought, I should suggest that my readers seize some opportunity when a group of Catholic friends are present to provoke discussion on the subject of hell. Should they do so, they will hear a variety of interesting theories of the kind I have been discussing, each one of which will imply a softening down of the old, Catholic, fundamentalist notion. Furthermore, it is more than likely that they will hear one or two highly reputable members of the group frankly confessing that they cannot believe in hell.

The significance of this state of mind among Catholics is far-reaching. It is an accepted theory of theologians that what is commonly, that is, more or less universally held by the faithful, must be true. The Holy Spirit is *in the Church* . . . "teaching all things and abiding for ever" . . . as Scripture says. What the faithful hold is what the Holy Spirit has taught them, openly through the Church's preachers, or insensibly by suggestion. If it be that the faithful hold a more moderate doctrine of hell than theologians expound, it is they, the faithful, who are right and the theologians who are

wrong. Unfortunately it is impossible to tell with certainty what is "universally held" by the faithful with respect to hell, but it may well be doubted that what *is* universally held is the doctrine of the *eternal* pit of torture for all who die in mortal sin, as the theologians understand *sin* and *eternity*.

The Modernist mind found its escape from the hell-dogma by interpreting Scripture in a figurative rather than a literal sense. They looked upon the hell of the fundamentalists as reflecting the mentality of the early Church, as the effort of the early Church to express its idea of the punishment due to sin. The dogma was and is true, infallibly true, in the sense that Cubist drawings are true pictures of what they are intended to represent. But to the Modernist mind another *image* than eternal hell-fire is required at the present day, to express adequately human thought, and the thought of the Church, about the punishment due to sin. Just as the assertions of the early theologians as to the flatness of the earth and the Ptolemaic astronomy were *true*, inasmuch as they represented their observations and thoughts on such matters, so their assertions as regards hell were true, even when they located it, as did St. Augustine, underneath the earth. It is, however, incumbent on the present generation to translate into its own language the *dicta* of the past.

"Descriptive pictures," wrote Cardinal Gibbons, "teach the illiterate what books make known to the learned. How many thousands would have died ignorant of the Christian faith if they had not been enlightened by paintings." Pictures, however, as His Eminence must

have known very well, represent only partial aspects of truth, and convey such aspects through a medium of distortion. The pictures of hell, whether oleographs of blazing furnaces and devils with red hot pitch-forks prodding lost souls; or verbal descriptions of orators; or inspired imaginings of saints and theologians; are in the end only *pictures*, not perhaps wholly false but *certainly* partly false. Even the one fairly detailed picture of hell contained in Scripture, that of Dives conversing with Lazarus and petitioning for a drop of water, is only true in the sense that Cubism is true. Pictures, whether painted by brush or pen, by prophet or mystic, which deal with such a subject as that we are considering, are, to use Cardinal Gibbons' further phrase, only "catechisms of the ignorant."

Theologians, "justifying the ways of God to men," explain the necessity of hell, on the grounds that were it not for hell the moral laws and the laws of the Church would not be obeyed! Man has need, so it is implied, of the fear of hell, so as to keep good. Without this fear, the majority of men would find no sufficiently strong motive to keep sober and chaste. Hell, so it is argued, is a crowning mercy since it preserves men from sin!

Arguments of this kind, "*post-factum*" arguments, are little more than rationalisations. It may be granted at once that the fear of hell does keep many Catholics obedient to the law, chaste, sober, and regular in their religious duties. But there are far more Catholics who, in spite of the threat of hell, disregard the precepts of

the Church and the moral law! If hell therefore is instituted for the purpose we have referred to, it means that the vast majority of Catholics are rendered liable to damnation so that the minority may be terrified into virtue! Most good men are good, not on account of hell, but in despite of hell. For many hell constitutes a strong motive for disbelief in God and the Church. There would probably be more faith in God, and more love of Him, were this terrible doctrine of hell unknown. Those who are moral—only or chiefly through the fear of hell—have as dynamic the lowest of all motives, that of craven fear. No doubt it is a strong motive, but is it a motive which gives birth to religion "pure and undefiled"? Can craven fear, which is largely a mental sickness, inspire man to "love his neighbour as himself" which is, together with the love of God, his highest duty?

Needless to say even half-belief in hell engenders many fears in the mind of the Catholic, but the unhappy, if inevitable, effects of the dogma do not end with fears. The dogma, rightly understood, instigates Catholics to *hate;* blind and unquenchable hate of the unfortunate souls who are lost in hell. For them a Catholic may not feel any pity, commiseration, or love. In loyalty to God he must hate those whom he is taught God hates for all eternity. Even though there may be among them friends that *were* once dear; now his love must be turned dutifully into detestation. "Love one another" is not interpreted by theologians as having any reference to lost souls. Again, an unfortunate consequence equally inevitable, which the dogma of hell brings in its train, is the

mental conflict it arouses between faith and reason. Try how they will, to avoid it, intelligent Catholics are faced with this conflict; reason cannot accept hell without bitter and continuous protest. There results, even in the best-disposed Catholics a latent incertitude, more or less distressing, about the divine truth of Catholicism. All goes well so long as the thought of hell can be repressed, but with its awakening comes trouble of mind, fear, and hate.

CHAPTER IX

ANGELICAL PURITY

THE Catholic Church has conserved unharmed the mediæval philosophy of sex. She continues to teach the possibility and the desirability of perfect physical and mental continence. She still adheres to the asocial doctrine that virginity is higher than matrimony, and to the "unscientific" theory that virginity is healthy alike for soul and body. The Church maintains the propriety and practicality of the "celibacy of the clergy," and will make no compromise with respect to divorce or birth-control. Needless to say she stigmatises as immoral and odious, "free-love," "trial-marriage," and all such fads, and has little sympathy for sex-enlightenment, and sex-equality platforms.

In two recent pronouncements of the present Pope the contrast between the attitude of the Church and the attitude of the modern world, in the matter of sex, was clearly manifested. On May 2 (1928), the Pope condemned the participation of young women and girls in a public gymnastic display at Rome, organised by the Fascist government, even though regulations of a kind to secure perfect propriety were issued. He declared: [1]

"Nobody can believe that (Christian Education) excludes or fails to appreciate instruction which can give the body agility, solid grace, health and strength. But

[1] *The World,* New York, May 3, 1928.

it must be done in the right way, at the right time, in the right place. Everything must be avoided which contrasts with reserve and modesty, which are the ornament and safeguard of virtue. Such instruction must contain no incentive to vanity or violence. *If a woman's hand must be raised, we hope and pray it may be raised only in prayer or in acts of charity.*"

The second pronouncement of the Holy Father had to do with modern modes of women's dress. He had received an audience of the organisers of a movement "Against Immorality in Women's Dress," and had been given an album containing the names of 50,000 ecclesiastics who had pledged themselves to wage war without compromise against "immodesty of dress in women." The Pope in a few words revealed his standpoint. "Early Christian women dragged into the Circus at Rome to be devoured by wild animals were more concerned in covering their nudity than in saving their lives." [1]

The kernel of the divergence between the modern world and the Church respecting sex lies in the fact that while the former regards sex as a purely natural need and urge, belonging to the realms of hygiene and biology, the Church looks upon sex as appertaining to the province of religion—*it* being the ground on which the devil deploys his forces for assaults upon men. Modern scientists ridicule the notion that the devil has anything to do with sex, but the Church still regards sex impulses as temptations to sin occasioned by the devil and concupiscence.

In the eyes of the Church, chastity is second only in

[1] *The World,* New York, August 2, 1928.

importance to faith. To safeguard chastity is no less necessary for salvation than to safeguard faith. It is therefore a primary function of Catholic religious training to foster the virtue of chastity, and this is done with so much good-will and thoroughness that *purity* is an obsession with most Catholic educators.

The Catholic system of educating to purity has often been described, and it will not be necessary to dwell upon it at length. Already the method of training children to a sense of the proximity of God, and of the angels and saints, has been explained. It is naturally considered that children will be all the more modest for knowing that "the eye of God" is upon them, and that their angel-guardians are by their sides. The first positive step towards building up a defence of chastity in the child is by teaching devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Mary stands for the ideal of purity; love of her is transmuted into love of purity. She is, by her litany of names, "Mother most Pure": "Mother most Chaste": "Mother Undefiled": "Mother Inviolate": "Queen of Virgins," and so forth. In her hymns she is called "Purest of Creatures"; "Sweet Maid"; "Virgin most Pure." Children, long before they know what it is all about, consecrate to her their chastity. And it is commonly held that no one can be chaste unless a devoted worshipper of Mary.

The next step in educating to purity consists of creating in the child fear and horror of impurity. In "Fander's Catechism," which of all catechisms is perhaps the most widely used throughout the world, we find the question:[1] "What are the consequences of Im-

[1] "Catechism of the Catholic Religion" (N. Y. Edit. 1908), p. 202.

purity"? The answer reads: "It robs man of his innocence and *infects his body and soul.* It leads him to many other sins and vices, and often to murder and despair; and it plunges him into misery, ignominy and shame, and finally into eternal damnation."

This exceedingly *strong* answer is pregnant of danger for several reasons. First of all it is applied by children to faults that they *think* constitute impurity (incontinence of urine, for instance), for many of them are completely ignorant of what sex is. Secondly it teaches those who are knowingly guilty of immodesties such as exhibitionism, or improper touches, or masturbation, that their *bodies are infected* thereby and that a dreadful future awaits them. The idea is apparently to terrorise them out of sinning, and to make them not only afraid but ashamed. "Why must we most carefully guard against impurity"? the Catechism continues. *Answer:* "Because no sin is more *shameful;* and because *none is attended with such dreadful consequences.*" One more question and answer must be added. "Why is this sin so shameful?" *Answer.* "Because man, who as the image and temple of God is called to a pure and holy life, is *degraded by it to the level of an impure and unclean animal;* whence it is styled, Sin of Impurity or Uncleanness."

The Church, as it were, stakes every cent she has on coaxing and frightening children into purity, going even so far as to pretend that sins which she knows perfectly well are inevitable (and that she knows are for the most part in no way injurious to health) are degrading to human nature and destructive of the body. Meanwhile the seeds of shame are sown in the minds of

children . . . and with shame the sense of inferiority and failure.

Confession plays its rôle in setting up a barrier against sins of the flesh. Children must examine their consciences on this matter before confession. They do so as follows.

"*Against the Sixth and Ninth Commandments.*" "Have you been guilty of acts of impurity? Have you used immodest language? Have you indulged in impure thoughts and desires? Have you wilfully looked at immodest objects and pictures? Have you read dangerous books? How often?" Meanwhile many children know nothing more about sex than the names of the sins against "purity." As to what constitutes the *immodesty* of an "immodest object" they are at a loss to understand. They do, however, whether innocent or not, gather the idea that there are some dreadful shameful sins, bringing with them appalling consequences, and they feel terribly afraid (and perhaps terribly curious) about them. Meanwhile Catholic educators, remembering Paul's words: "Let it [uncleanness]not be so much as named among you," are silent. They warn the children against allowing their teeth to remain soiled overnight, and against allowing their nails to remain filthy and uncut, but they fear to advise them against physical excitation of the sex organs.

The Church is open to criticism on the grounds of tolerating to a very large extent a kind of mystical education to chastity which is at once far removed from good sense and practicality. Prayerbooks are put into the hands of American boys which contain pictures

and prayers purporting to be stimuli to chaste thinking, but which in truth are as likely as not to work in the opposite direction. In one such prayerbook there is a frontispiece of Christ tenderly kissing a delicate looking boy! In others we have "Little Flower" prayers, such as, "O My Beloved, for love of Thee I am content not to see here on earth the sweetness of thy glance nor *to feel the ineffable kiss of thy Sacred Lips*, but . . ." etc. Images of Saints abound which illustrate what we may call conventional chastity, and the implements thereof—disciplines, lilies, lambs, eyes raised to heaven, hands crossed on the breast and so forth—but in such images and pictures there is nothing to suggest that love of learning or art, industry, humanitarianism, and good temper have anything to say to the conquest of self-control. The implication is that an American boy, if he wants to be chaste, must yearn to kiss Jesus like the "Little Flower," or aspire to thwack his back with knotted cords and bits of bone like Aloysius.

It belongs to the mediæval mind to confuse *physical* continence with chastity, and to pretend that the former is a practical aim and a virtue, whereas it is more likely to be a disease. Deliberately, Catholic educators, lay and clerical, leave boys and girls in false consciences, suffering them to regard as unchaste and sinful things that are perfectly inevitable. The very conception of "Angelical Purity" (the much used phrase of Catholic books of piety) is misleading. Angels were (we speak the language of concepts) sexless, passionless, and an ideal put before humans as attainable which does not make allowance for human pas-

sion and the physiology of sex is absurd. Catholic philosophy of sex, based as it is upon mediæval anatomy, does not take into account the part which the secretions of the sex glands play in the organism as a whole. Nor does it adapt itself to the finding of science to the effect that without sex-life full emotional, mental, and physical maturity is impossible. Too late, the average Catholic finds that he was misdirected in being taught to war down and *crush* sex. He finds that sex cannot be put to rout by prayers, holy water, and penances. He started life envisaging sex as a kind of devil in his loins, bent upon his destruction, implacably hostile to his welfare. After a life of weary struggle he discovers that in itself it is no more demoniacal than digestion or respiration, and as little likely as the latter to be immobilised by a sign of the cross. He comes at last to distinguish between sex and sin, between the law of Nature (God's law) and theological legislation.

The Church calls for supreme heroism from her married daughters. Not even the severest rule of Carmel demands of its nuns so much forbearance, suffering, and humiliation as is asked by the Church of girls who enter wedlock. "The wife," says the Catechism,[1] "should be free from vanity, love of finery, and capriciousness; she should be chaste, pious, modest, industrious, economical." She should be able to say with Sara: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I never coveted a husband, and have kept my soul free from all lust. Never have I joined myself with them that play, neither have I made myself partner with them that walk

1 "Fander's Catechism," *Marriage.*

in lightness. But a husband I consented to take with thy fear, not with my lust."

First of all it must be understood that a Catholic couple are called upon to emulate in married life "the love of Christ for His Church." The norm therefore put before them is a love that is supernatural and asexual. The husband and wife must have constantly in view the good of their souls and mutual edification. Marriage as envisaged by the Church is more holy than a call to religious life; *it is a sacrament.* In it there is no place for mere sensual pleasure. The natural urges may only be satisfied for the purpose of procreation. "Petting" is lawful only in so far as directly or indirectly it is conducive to the same end, and at all times the couple must be mindful of modesty and mutual edification. The wife must go on bearing children for ever, for it is, save under special circumstances, unlawful and sinful for her to "refuse" her husband, and *never* is it permissible to have recourse to birth-restriction.

When there is grave danger to the wife's health, or for serious economic motives, the couple may *abstain,* and in that way frustrate Nature and practise a negative form of birth-control. But never is it lawful for them to avail themselves of the expedients that contraceptionists recommend. Such methods involve indulgence in venereal pleasure without the possibility of procreation, an indulgence which the Church judges to be immoral and unlawful.

The Church's emphasis on *angelical* purity in the unmarried, and unfailing modesty and restraint in the married, . . . which amounts to a development of the

Pauline "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," [1] leads up to the idea of "asexual marriage." Such "asexual marriages" were in vogue in the early Church until condemned at Nicæa (325 A. D.). It was considered by the fervent unmarried deacons and deaconesses of those days that chastity was enhanced by temptation, and so they lived together, though not in wedlock. Mystics of later date, though married like Jeanne Marie Guyon, regarded Jesus as their spouse and consecrated themselves contractually to Him. Meanwhile they withdrew as far as possible from their natural husbands, preferring "asexual" to "sexual" marriage.

It is of course too much to say that the Church puts the ideal of "asexual marriage" before those whom she joins in wedlock, for she desires that there should be children. But, on the other hand, she holds in abhorrence marriages where the emphasis is on sex. Moralist theologians have determined in the greatest detail what is allowable by way of sensual play, and what is forbidden. Nothing is left to chance. The Church expects that married folk will inquire with scrupulous care from their confessors in regard to such matters, and the confessors have answers (approved by the Church) ready for all possible questions, even of the most delicate kind. The marriage act should be carried out, according to the mind of the Church, with so much modesty and purity of intention as to edify rather than shock the angels that stand near-by.

But however holily performed, marital intercourse is still looked upon with suspicion as potentially unbecoming, and displeasing to God, for pious couples are

[1] I Cor. VII, 1.

warned to *abstain* before receiving Communion. Catholic priests, who are duly married according to the Eastern rite are supposed to "abstain" for three days before they say Mass. After childbirth, a Catholic woman must be "Churched," that is, ritually purified, as though she were in some way spiritually contaminated by the experiences she has undergone. In fact, in the mind of the Church, sex whether lawfully indulged or not, whether involuntarily (and therefore sinlessly) experienced, as in sleep, or voluntarily and sinfully experienced, always contaminates more or less. Only little children who know no sex are perfectly pure and acceptable and holy in the eyes of the Church.

Once more, must I defend myself against exaggeration? Let me do so by appealing to the experience of priests, (to their general confessional experience), embracing contact with unmarried boys and girls, married men and women, besides nuns, and fellow priests. What do priests find as the universal reaction of the good Catholic vis-à-vis of sex? Only one answer is possible. The reaction, ever and always, among saints and sinners, celibates and married, men and women, is *SHAME*. A nun tells of her temptations; though she be innocent of any sin, she is overwhelmed with *shame* at having had any contact with sex. The boy or girl confessing his or her first sin of impurity is crushed with shame. The worldly, luxurious priest, with many immoralities to his count, is less confused perhaps than others, but even he, unless an utter cynic, is also *ashamed*. The young wife, relating some scruple as regards "refusing her husband" is abashed. The young man who con-

fesses that he has read "a bad book" blushes and perspires with shame. So universal is the shame reaction in penitents, when there is any mention of sex, that a sensitive confessor feels exceedingly distressed through the contagion of this debilitating sentiment. And if anything stands out clearly, as a result of confessional experience with pious Catholics, it is that they, thanks to the suggestion embedded in their minds by their religious training, are under the impression that somehow or other, sex is more than anything else foul, degrading, and unholy. Only a life that is completely *asexual* is in their philosophy completely blameless before God.

Frankly (but how stupidly!) spiritual directors congratulate their penitents on "confessing to temptations against the sixth," [1] even when there was no sin whatsoever, as though the very temptation was itself something to be ashamed of, something materially wrong. Such directors of souls advise their spiritual children to continue confessing their temptations "against Holy Purity"! What are the penitents to conclude from such advice but that sex-phobia is a virtue, and asexuality an ideal? As we mentioned above, a certain allowance should perhaps be made in the case of celibates for deliberately developing sex-phobia. It stands for them as a substantial "rationalisation." It is compensatory for them, and brings them whatever comfort "sour-grapes" philosophy can bring. But it is positively criminal in them to encourage a like attitude in non-celibates with whom they come in contact. Nuns who indirectly suggest to the girls under their charge that "marriage

[1] The Sixth Commandment among Catholics corresponds to the seventh among Protestants.

isn't nice"; that the phrase "a healthy sex-life" is vulgar, improper, and sinful, are spreading poison. Yet it is to be feared that many nuns, owing to the atmosphere in which they live, and the nature of the asceticism which they cultivate, are guilty in this respect.

It must not, however, be concluded, from what I have written above, that the Church should be denied the credit she deserves for holding up before her children, married and unmarried, a high standard of moral conduct, and a noble ideal of chastity. Largely it is due to her that the contractual element of marriage is maintained in our day as a serious consideration, and that "the sanctity of marriage" is not a lost motive among men. Neither should it be thought from what I have written that it is rare to find priests and nuns who envisage sex as it should be envisaged, namely as a perfectly clean, interesting, attractive, and well-conceived human function, something quite as much to the credit of the Divine Creator as the cardiac mechanism. But though this be true, there remains the sad fact that an unhealthy, shame-breeding outlook on sex is conveyed through the medium of Catholic training and teaching.

CHAPTER X

CANON LAW MARRIAGES

IN connection with marriage there are three cases of common occurrence in which Catholics who obey dutifully the laws of the Church suffer acutely. The first, the commonest case, is where a married couple, who through poverty, or the physical delicacy of the wife, cannot have any more children, are forced to carry what Father Martindale, S.J., describes as "*the frightful burden*" of married celibacy. The second case is that of a Catholic, legally and canonically separated from his or her partner, still obliged to remain unwed, even when the partner disregarding the laws of the Church has married again. From the Church's standpoint nothing whatever can or will be done for Catholics in either of these classes. The third case is that of a Catholic, man or woman, deeply in love with one of another religion and yet prevented from marrying by the Church owing to the non-fulfilment by the non-Catholic party of some Canonical requirement.

In a sense the Church places obstacles in the way of every marriage. There are always Canonical conditions to fulfil, having to do with "sponsalia," or "bans," or time or place, or authorisations of pastors. It is far from being a simple matter for a Catholic to get validly married. He has always to look to it that

there are no *impediments.* "Before the celebration of marriage it must be made clear that there is nothing opposed to its valid and licit celebration." There are an immense number of *impediments,* many of them created by the Church's legislation, and having nothing in common with natural law. Such for instance is the "*impedimentum criminis.*" It has to do with the case where a couple wish to get married who had previously committed adultery together on the occasion whereof they exchanged promises of subsequent marriage as soon as the death of the injured husband or wife (or both husband and wife, their previous partners) would leave them free to do so. There is no end to the technicalities of Canon law which impinge upon the licitness or the validity of Catholic marriages. Some of these impediments are dispensable; many are not. The Church of course does not recognise (for her children) civil-marriage, or common-law marriage. *She recognises only* "*Canon law*" *marriages.* And if her children fail to marry *canonically,* however much they may conform to the natural law and to the civil law, in her eyes their union is infamous and sinful.

It is impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that in respect of marriage the doctrine and practice of the Church conflicts with that of the State. The Church teaches that she alone has the right to administer the sacraments to her children, and that as every valid marriage between Catholics is a sacrament, marriage between Catholics belongs exclusively to her jurisdiction. She concedes to the State the right to determine and provide for the subsequent civil effects of such marriages, but she rejects the claim of the State to inter-

fere in determining the conditions of the marriage-contract, or passing judgment thereon. "When, however, the State enacts laws inimical to the marriage laws of the Church, practically denying her right to protect the sacred character of matrimony, she cannot allow her children to submit to such enactments." [1] Marriage in the eyes of the Civil Law is a status as well as a contract and is subject to the jurisdiction of the State. The State claims the right to dissolve the contract and the status when certain conditions are fulfilled. The Church denies her that right, in the case at least of baptised persons, whether they be Catholic or not. Mr. Charles C. Marshall quotes Dr. Woywod, in this connection.[2] "As the civil governments of today do not as a rule admit the right of the Church to regulate the marriage contract and the marital state by her laws, and they legislate on marriage independently of the Church, here is thus a conflict between the two sets of laws." For the moment, however, we wish merely to bring out the point that irrespective of what the State may decide as to the nullity or validity of the marriage of a baptised couple, the Church claims the right to over-ride the State's decision, and to try the case independently in her own court, the Rota at Rome.

Considerable interest was taken by the American public in the announcement in the early part of 1927 that the Rota had annulled the marriages of Consuelo Vanderbilt and the Duke of Marlborough, and of Count Marconi and Miss O'Brien. There followed considerable discussion in the Press in various countries, and

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, vol IX, p. 699.
[2] "The Roman Catholic Church in the Modern State," p. 227.

the Sacred Tribunal of the Rota was subjected to much criticism. It was charged that Rome had abandoned her old-time stand for the indissolubility of marriage: that she had committed trespass in meddling with the marriages of non-Catholics who did not belong to her jurisdiction; and lastly that she had displayed favouritism in doing for the rich what she was unwilling to do for the poor.

Mgr. Massimi, the dean of the Sacred Tribunal of the Rota, set up a "vigorous defence" in the presence of the Pope [1] and described as absurd the criticism that had been levelled against his court. He pointed out that fifty per cent of the cases that came before the Rota were tried free of charge and that no favouritism was shown the rich. He proved that the Church's jurisdiction in marriage cases extended to all *baptised persons*, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, in virtue of the fact that there was question of a sacrament (the Church being the sole guardian thereof). And lastly he expounded to His Holiness the theological and moral grounds on which the decisions were based. The Pope thereupon congratulated Mgr. Massimi and urged him to continue to "harmonise the supreme law of the indissolubility of marriage with the just rights of the individuals." Furthermore he authorised the Rota "to continue to listen to the cases of non-Catholics."

The story of the Vanderbilt-Marlborough case is told in full in the "*Acta Apostolicæ Sedis*" under date July 29, 1926. Judgment was given on August 7, 1926.

The story is a brief romance (in Latin and French)

[1] *New York Times*, October 2, 1927.

telling of Consuelo's love for M—— R—— and of her mother's opposition to that affair, of a trip to Europe in 1894 and the mother's invitation to Charles, Duke of Marlborough to be her guest at Newport. Thither the noble Duke came in September 1895, remaining a fortnight, during which period Consuelo was urged so strongly to accept the ducal hand that she consented . . . *tearfully*. The mother certainly used pressure. Among the sworn testimony of Consuelo we find the following. "My mother withdrew me from the influence of my suitor M—— R——. She made me leave the country (1894); intercepted all the letters that he wrote to me and that I wrote to him. She caused scenes continually. She said that I should obey her and that she knew very well that I had not the right to choose a husband; that I should take the man of her choice; that my opposition was ruining her health and that I would be the cause of her death. There was one terrible scene when she told me that if I succeeded in escaping she would seize the first occasion of shooting my suitor M—— R—— *and that she would be put in prison and hung and that I would be responsible*." Also "I persist in declaring that if I consented to marry the Duke of Marlborough it was under very strong pressure from my mother and according to her absolute wishes. There were in addition threats to which I have already alluded. My mother often said to me that if I persisted in opposing her will (such was her state of health), my obstinacy might occasion her death."

The marriage was arranged at Newport and took place in New York on November 6, 1895. The Duke subsequently admitted that his fair bride "arrived late

at the wedding and seemed troubled," while the mother-in-law had the honesty to confess long years after: "I forced my daughter to marry the Duke. I always had an absolute influence over my daughter."

Consuelo found the Duke *difficile*. "The arrogance of his character made me hostile to him. He seemed to despise everything that was not English. My pride was offended." Nevertheless she bore him two children and lived with him on and off until 1905 when there was a separation. In 1920 there was a civil *divorce* in England and both parties remarried. Five years later Consuelo applied to the Catholic Bishop of Southwark for the annulment of *her first marriage* (that with the Duke). She now wished to live as a Catholic in harmony with the Church's law. From London (Southwark) the case was sent to Rome.

The Roman Canonists were easily satisfied on the score that there had been too much pressure in eliciting Consuelo's consent to marry Marlborough in 1895. *Their difficulty was to attain "moral certitude" that the consent was not revalidated subsequently.* They decided that it was not revalidated on the grounds that Consuelo did not know enough canon law to be aware of the fact that her marriage was invalid. Without knowing that her marriage was invalid she could not revalidate it! Quaintly they held that "such knowledge is not to be presumed in women. Its possession must be proved" (quæ scientia ceteroquin in feminis non est presumenda sed e contra probanda). The Court annulled the marriage of 1895 and decided that "Consuelo was to pay all the expenses of the trial. ("Eandem Consuelam Vanderbilt ad omnes judicii expensas teneri").

The story of the Marconi-O'Brien case is hardly less interesting. The *Acta* (in Latin, French and Italian) tells of the marriage of William Marconi and Beatrice O'Brien in a Protestant Church in London on March 16, 1905. In this case also there was maternal interference. Miss O'Brien's mother was reluctant to allow her daughter to marry a quasi-Catholic (Marconi's father was a Catholic although he himself had been brought up a member of the Church of England). In his petition for annulment before the Rota, Marconi confessed that at the time of his betrothal to Miss O'Brien he had doubts as to the intensity of her affection for him, and he extracted from her the admission that "she was not sure" how far she was devoted to him. "Wherefore I declared to her that in the unfortunate eventuality of the marriage not being happy we could have recourse to divorce proceedings and she agreed with me in respect to this possible measure." Marconi, twenty years later, swore to the "impression left on his mind" that Miss O'Brien's mother would have objected to an absolutely indissoluble marriage. He told his own mother and some friends of the "*condition*" under which he and Miss O'Brien were marrying. Miss O'Brien's evidence (also given twenty years later!) substantiated that of her husband "though," records the *Acta*, "with not the same perspicuity *in her first as in her later depositions!*" There was hear-say evidence to the existence of the "*condition*" on the part of Miss O'Brien's brother, Donough O'Brien.

In the year 1918 Marconi and Miss O'Brien parted, and six years later they were divorced. Two years later, Marconi wishing to marry a Catholic applied to Cardi-

nal Bourne (London) for an annulment of his first marriage, and in due time his case was forwarded to the Rota. Once again the Rota were easily satisfied that the first marriage was vitiated by the agreement entered into between husband and wife with respect to the possibility of a divorce, but the question as to whether or not consent had been *revalidated* during their long life together arose. *On a specious pretext it was decided that no revalidation had taken place.* The Rota account of the case states that before a revalidation there should have been a "revocatio" (a revoking) of the agreement entered into. Such a "revocatio" being a *fact* was not to be presumed but to be proven positively. As there was no positive proof of it, it was juridically non-existent. Hence the invalid marriage-consent of 1905 had never been revalidated. Hence there had never been any marriage between Marconi and Miss O'Brien. The Court decided further "that all the expenses of the trial" were to be paid by Marconi. Judgment to this effect was given April 11, 1927.

The criticisms of the Vanderbilt-Marlborough annulment have been very varied. In some quarters it was said that the element of parental coercion enters into such a large number of marriages that if *it* be taken as a source of annulling marriages the bottom is knocked out of the historic "indissolubility" doctrine. Catholics who are honest with themselves know that among certain Catholic races, fathers and mothers exercise in no half-hearted fashion the utmost pressure in making their daughters marry the object of parental choice. In urging a son to be a priest, or a daughter to be a nun, very great duress is also used. If "fear depriv-

ing one of freedom to dissent" (*with the Vanderbilt fear as the norm and measure*) be sufficient to vitiate contracts and vows, what potential chaos exists in ecclesiastical and domestic Catholic life! A thousand priests and nuns can proclaim, "I was coerced. I am free of my vows!" Tens of thousands of married folk can do the same! Winfred Ernest Garrison, caustically, but not unfairly, summarises the effects of the Vanderbilt-Marlborough annulment thus:[1] "And all of this in the interest of maintaining a professedly higher standard of domestic morality and a level of social purity to which the State and the Protestants do not attain! Nothing could be much more demoralising to ethical standards in reference to domestic ties than to set up a confusion in which no person who respects the decisions of the Papal Courts can be quite sure whether he is married or not or if so, to what extent and in what relations. . . . There must be ten thousand couples now living together in the bonds of more or less holy wedlock who have reason to suspect that the consent of one member was obtained only after the exercise of considerable pressure from relatives and friends. They can never know whether they are really married or not until the Rota, or a diocesan court, passes upon their cases."

The criticism which comes from the pen of Mr. Charles C. Marshall,[2] emanates from his juristic and legal examination of the case. He finds that Church law is lacking with respect to the prevention of "fraud" in contractual relations . . . "the Roman [Catholic]

1 "Catholicism and the American Mind," pp. 249, 250.
2 "The Roman Catholic Church in the Modern State," pp. 238, 239.

Church in its maintenance of a legalistic status of marriage and its own 'jurisdiction' over it, disregards those great salutary principles in reference to the validity of contracts and the suppression of fraud which the experience of mankind has found absolutely essential." Should not the presumption have been in the Vanderbilt case that an educated and much-travelled lady like Miss Vanderbilt knew, or (what legally is the same thing) had means of knowing, about the powers of the Rota to annul marriages in cases of deficient consent? Should not "fraud" have been presumed in her contention that she knew nothing about such powers? The Marconi-O'Brien marriage was obviously, from the Church's view-point, fraudulent, and yet the Church co-operated in extracting the couple from the situation in which their "fraudulent" contract had placed them. Why should the Church interfere in such cases, to the great offence of non-Catholics, seeing that the parties did not in the ordinary sense belong to the Church?

The history of the Church's attitude as regards "mixed marriages" is of no little interest. In the early Church marriages with infidels were not considered invalid. Christians might freely marry *even* Jews though the Church preferred them to marry pagans. [1] Gradually, however, feeling opposed to "mixed marriages" grew strong and by the twelfth century the impediment "*disparitas cultus*" was regarded as "diriment," that is, as rendering null and void a marriage. Ecclesiastical authority could, however, dispense from this impediment. The Council of Chalcedon (451 A. D., 14th. Canon) forbade minor clerics to marry heretical women

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. IX, p. 698.

or to give their children in marriage to heretics. Until the Council of Trent "clandestine" marriages, those namely that were contracted without the assistance of the Church, were considered valid save in some localities and for limited periods. Catholics and non-Catholics could marry validly, according to God's law, by an exchange of consent, without having to circumvent canonical obstacles. From Trent on, however, the Church, fearing that she would lose her children if she allowed them to marry heretics, became more stringent and enforced as far as she could the Tridentine law of "clandestinity" which made it incumbent on Catholics who wished to marry non-Catholics to have the Church's permission and to marry *in facie ecclesiæ* (before ecclesiastical authority). However, the Protestants in many countries were too strong to allow the Church to publish her Tridentine decree. In due time the Church's marriage laws became exceedingly involved. In 1741 Benedict XIV proclaimed that in Holland and Belgium mixed marriages were valid provided the civil laws were observed. In 1785 this "Benedictine dispensation" was extended to Ireland, and later to various other countries. "By degrees," says the Catholic Encyclopedia, "the Popes felt constrained to make various concessions for mixed marriages." One may well inquire on looking back to those times, who exercised the *constraint?* One wonders why no similar *constraint* is exercised today? There is more need today than ever of the greatest possible freedom of action with regard to mixed marriages, and yet the laws of the Church are more stringent than ever. It would seem that the Papacy has gained to such a degree in power that it no longer feels itself

obliged to bow to the will of peoples, whether Catholic or Protestant!

In some countries the civil laws prescribed that the sons of a mixed marriage should follow the religion of the father, and the daughters that of the mother. *The Church had to submit.* The *submission* is thus euphemistically described in the Catholic Encyclopedia. "Without betraying their sacred trust, the popes could never sanction such legislation, but in order to avoid greater evils they permitted in some states of Germany *a passive assistance* on the part of the parish priest at marriages entered into under such conditions. . . . In places where the heretical preacher occupied the place of a civil magistrate and the laws of the country required marriages to be entered into before him in order that certain legal effects may follow, it is permitted to the Catholic party to appear before him, either before or after the marriage has taken place in the presence of the parish priest. If, however, the heretical minister is held to be discharging a religious duty in such witnessing of a marriage, then it is unlawful for a Catholic to renew consent before him as this would be a communion in sacred things and an implicit yielding to heresy" (Pius IX instruction, 1864). From Pius IX's day onward the Church has plucked up courage to enforce her marriage laws in every country *save in Germany,* and now, since 1908, mixed marriages must be celebrated before the priest (a dispensation having first been obtained) and all children must be reared Catholics. Non-Catholic peoples have no longer the power to restrain the Pope from enforcing his will upon them in

this respect, and Catholics have no longer the freedom that their forefathers enjoyed.

The average Catholic is far from being clear in his own mind as to the very important distinction between the fundamental (divine) laws governing matrimony and disciplinary, or circumstantial, laws. The former are in the eyes of the Church indispensable and unchangeable (although Moses ventured to dispense from them!). The latter are, all of them, changeable and dispensable. Most of the *impediments*, all the conditions of the *Ne Temere*, all that concerns marrying before priests, or in churches, or with published bans, *are mere Church rules and could perfectly well be dispensed with.* The Church could accept as sufficient and satisfactory, for licit and valid marriage, the ordinary conditions prescribed by civil law, or even less. A formal exchange of consent, an agreement arrived at between a single man of any or of no faith, and a single woman, is all that the divine law requires, and the Church could afford to be satisfied with what God has instituted.

But one must not forget that the economic law has to do with the policy of the Church. The more conditions for the licitness and the validity of marriage that the Church enforces, the more her children are rendered dependent upon her good-will and favour, and the more incitement there is for them to bestow largess upon the Church. In this respect every Church is the same. Marriage is a source of revenue to priests and bishops and it is useless to deny the significance of that fact. Bans, dispensations, ceremonies all cost money and the money goes to the Church. The Dean of the

Sacred Tribunal of the Rota was no doubt perfectly truthful in stating that fifty per cent of the cases tried before his Court were tried free of charge but he also admitted that in 1926 only forty-five final decisions were given! Now *if* the poor of all countries could, without charge, have their marital doubts inquired into as carefully and as fully as were those of Miss Vanderbilt, the Rota would be called on to issue not forty-five but forty-five thousand decisions each year.

Apropose of "birth-restriction" it is interesting to call to mind a curious anomaly of the Church's interpretation of the natural law. According to the Church the primary end of marriage (which is "*natural in purpose though divine in origin*" [1]) is the perpetuation of the race; its secondary ends are the mutual help and society which the married pair enjoy; together with the safeguard it affords them from sins of lust . . . it is called in the Catholic Encyclopedia "a lawful remedy for concupiscence." Now, if in exchanging the consent that constitutes the marriage contract and begets the sacrament a condition be explicitly or implicitly formed by one or both of the parties to limit the procreation of offspring or to have no children at all, the contract is null and void; there is no marriage. It is held that such a condition vitiates the primary end of marriage. However, if in exchanging consent the parties agree to live celibate lives, to observe perfect chastity, *the marriage is valid*, even though in this case not only the primary end of marriage but its chief secondary end is vitiated! "The agreement to abstain from the use of conjugal rights is, however, quite different, and does not nullify

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. IX, p. 699.

the marriage contract." [1] The lay man will find it difficult to distinguish between the two cases; an agreement not to have children, and an agreement to abstain from intercourse, Perhaps he will find it impossible to understand how in the latter case, where through piety there is made a vow of abstinence from intercourse, the pair are *married in the Gospel sense*.[2] The gospel says of a married couple "*and they shall be two in one flesh.*" But how can married celibates be "two in one flesh"? How can such marriage be true and valid in the eyes of the Church and a *sacrament*, when it is *not* the kind of marriage contemplated in the Bible? In no sense does it harmonise with God's command, "increase and multiply"!

Cardinal Gibbons [3] in proclaiming the glory of the Church's stand against divorce rhetorically addresses himself to Christian women thus: "Christian wives and mothers, what gratitude you owe to the Catholic Church for the honourable position you hold in society! If you are no longer regarded as the slave but the equal of your husband; if you are no longer the toy of his caprice and liable to be discarded at any moment . . . etc. . . . you owe your emancipation to the Church! You are especially indebted for your liberty to the Popes who rose up in all the majesty of their spiritual power to vindicate the rights of injured wives against the lustful tyranny of their husbands." Indissolubility of marriage was therefore in the eyes of Cardinal Gibbons, and is still in the eyes of the Church, a particular

[1] Ibid. p. 702.
[2] Math. XIX: 4–6.
[3] "Faith of Our Fathers," p. 415.

benefit for women, a safeguard for their rights as against "the lustful tyranny of man." Unfortunately however for the value and historicity of this argument, it happens, as Dr. John A. Ryan points out, that about seventy per cent of divorces are *obtained by wives!* It is the woman therefore, at least the modern woman, who least of all is appreciative of the chivalrous efforts of the Church on her behalf. And in the opinion of many it is the Catholic wife who is most piteously engulfed in the morass when there is an unhappy marriage.

How common is the case among the Catholic poor of a wife, mother of many children, a drudge, the victim of a drunken husband's cruelty, tied down by traditional understanding of her *duty*, to slave on till death, afraid of applying to the courts for relief against her husband; warned by the priests of the danger to her own soul, and to the eternal salvation of her children's souls, should she sue for divorce and alimony. Where is then the *liberty* of which Cardinal Gibbons speaks? "You are especially indebted for your liberty to the Popes who rose up in all the majesty of their spiritual power to vindicate the rights of injured wives against the lustful tyranny of their husbands." What Popes? What did they do? Where is the liberty?

The present writer believes firmly in monogamy, in the sacredness and inherent indissolubility of the marriage tie. He glories in the fact that the Catholic Church, in spite of all the antagonism of modern social propagandists, adheres to her stand for monogamy and against divorce. But he believes also that the Church should recognise civil marriages as valid for her chil-

dren, and should regard with indulgence the conduct of those among her children who seek and obtain legal separation in the Civil Courts.

Should her children, after such *separation*, remarry and live in "legal concubinage" it is hard to see what the Church gains by excommunicating them and forbidding them the sacraments. They may be in perfectly good faith and unable to accept the severe doctrine of the Church as regards "post-separation" celibacy. Why should they not be encouraged to live as dutiful Catholics, coming to Mass and so forth? Why should the Church point the finger of scorn at them? Are there not among the Church's best-loved sons, thieves of big business; slanderers of the law-courts; "honourable" married men who support mistresses; politicians; and so forth? Are any of the latter classes excommunicate? Then, why the former?

The Church might well (in charity) regard the second union of such "remarried" Catholics as "companionship." Sex does not always enter into such unions to the extent that morbid-minded moralists think. Sometimes it does not enter in at all! Sometimes the union is the result of loneliness and an intimate conviction in the heart of a "separated" Catholic wife or husband that "it is not good to live alone." But the Church, which long ago suffered unmarried deacons and deaconesses to live together, anathematises all forms of post-separation "companionship," and excommunicates the parties if they have their new status legalised in civil courts. Why? Well, such legalised "companionship" is *uncanonical!*

CHAPTER XI

SHOULD PRIESTS MARRY?

IN the Catholic world there is something approaching a change of outlook in regard to clerical celibacy. It is nowadays more often discussed both in lay and ecclesiastical circles. The squeamishness of a generation ago has disappeared, and it is no longer considered blasphemous, or scandalous or atheistic for a Catholic to express views in favour of the modification of the Church's law. In addition the Catholic mind is no longer wedded to the incorrect notion that celibacy is an essential and permanent characteristic of its priesthood.

It is pretty well known that the process of introducing the practice of celibacy into the Church was a very gradual one. Priests, deacons and sub-deacons were perfectly free to marry during the first three or four centuries of Christianity. Many bishops were married, and it was not until the Spanish Council of Elvira (about 295 A. D.) that serious conciliar legislation on the subject began. For eight centuries following something akin to "trial and error" experiment was carried on by the Church in respect of celibacy, with, however, the cause of celibacy gradually gaining ground. During the "Iron Age," the period of decay following the break-up of the Carlovingian Empire, priests and

bishops in most places acted as they pleased as regards marrying, but even then, as Father Thurston, S.J., contends, "the principle of sacerdotal celibacy was never *completely surrendered* in the official enactments of the Church." [1] According to the same authority, "the victory of the cause of celibacy" was not finally achieved until 1123 when the First Lateran Council legislated for the *invalidity* of the marriages contracted by subdeacons or ecclesiastics of any of the higher orders.

The increasing willingness of Catholics to discuss the *pros* and *cons* of clerical celibacy is no doubt symptomatic of the present day when not even very sacred subjects are taboo in conversation. The better understanding of the psychology of sex, and the fuller appreciation of the mental and physical strain endured by such as are wholly deprived of sex-life is an additional incentive to a franker and more sympathetic investigation of the subject. Catholics are well aware of the fact that the Church holds the power, without repudiating a jot or tittle of her dogma, to change or abrogate the existing laws concerning celibacy; and it is openly held by not a few that the time is fast approaching when the Church should take action in the matter. "In early days," they say, "the *narrow way*, the path of edification lay along the lines of sacrificing the joys of married life. But in the present age, when the prevalent vice in the eyes of the Church is birth-restriction, and when Christian marriage is regarded as an impossible ideal by so many, the *narrow way*, the path of edification seems to lie along the lines of ex-

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, *Celibacy*

emplary family life and a large flock of children." In brief they hold that were Catholic pastors and curates to marry, and display before the world the Catholic ideal of marriage; domesticity, marital fidelity, industry, and numerous offspring; the encouragement given to pious lay Catholics to follow the same hard road to heaven would be enormous. They hold that it would far outweigh the edification given by devout (but selfish) bachelorhood.

In the discussion of celibacy it seems quite beside the mark to investigate the question of clerical morals. In general it is thought that there are good and bad clergy. No one can prove more or prove less. Father Thurston, S.J., claims for the Catholic clergy that on the whole they have borne their burden with substantial success, but he adds significantly that "the one serious objection against the law of clerical celibacy is the difficulty which its observance presents for all but men of exceptionally strong character and high principle." Needless to say it is a constant and increasingly difficult problem for the Church, in the present age of religious indifference, to staff her Sees, Parishes and Seminaries with men "of exceptionally strong character and high principle." Such men are always rare; more so now perhaps than ever.

That there should be scandals among a celibate clergy is of course inevitable. Even were Priests married there would still be scandals, and hence to build a plea for the modification of the law of celibacy on the grounds that it would put an end to clerical scandals is quite absurd. *Celibacy was not enacted for the purpose of improving the morals of the clergy; neither should it be abrogated*

for any such reason. Celibacy is but a mode or manner of asceticism, in some respects resembling fasting, which may or may not be conducive to good morals. In itself it is neither good nor bad, virtuous nor vicious, Christian nor Pagan. It has been associated with a hundred different forms of religion, some of them of high and some of low moral tone. It is as much a characteristic of Buddhism (as in Thibet) as of Catholicism. In last analysis the grounds on which it should be adopted or repudiated are not religious or moral, but hygienic and economic.

If it can be shown therefore that there are solid reasons, of a *hygienic* and *economic* kind increasingly urgent in the present day for abolishing clerical celibacy it would become the Church to take them into consideration. Catholic apologists no doubt maintain [1] that "the principle which underlies the Church's action in enforcing celibacy upon her clergy *is not limited to the utilitarian aspect* but goes even deeper . . . *mystical reasons* (based upon the higher sanctity of Virginity) have always held a prominent place in the thought of the Fathers of the Church." But should considerations based on mysticism outweigh more substantial reasons? Are they not *presupposed* in all that the Church does? And could she not very well invoke them in favour of abrogating, as she did in favour of enforceing celibacy? The true dynamic of her conduct in the matter of celibacy, as history clearly shows, was utilitarian and economic. All through the early Middle Ages there was fear on the part of the Church that married clergy would (as they did in many places)

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, "Celibacy."

occupy their Benefices as personal property and bequeath them to their children. "For if Archbishops," wrote St. Bonaventure, "and bishops now had children they would rob and plunder all the goods of the Church so that little or nothing would be left for the poor. For since they now heap up wealth and enrich nephews removed from them by almost incalculable degrees of affinity what would they do if they had legitimate children?" Simony in all its forms was the worst evil from which the Church was suffering in those days. Even Popes enriched their children and relatives with valuable benefices, and in some cases, sought to keep the Papal succession within their own families. The Church therefore to protect its economic interests was constrained to establish celibacy, and the ultimate means to which she had recourse was to sell into slavery the wives and children of married priests. The severity of some of her enactments was atrocious. We quote the Catholic Encyclopedia [1] "The attack [on married priests] was conducted along two distinct lines of action. In the first place disabilities of all kinds were enacted and *as far as possible enforced against the wives and children of ecclesiastics.* Their offspring were declared to be of servile condition, debarred from sacred orders and in particular incapable of succeeding to their fathers' benefices. The earliest decree in which the children were declared to be *slaves, the property of the Church, and never to be enfranchised* seems to have been a canon of the Synod of Pavia in 1018. Similar penalties were promulgated later on against the wives

[1] "History of Sacerdotal Celibacy" by H. C. Lea is the most authoritative work on the subject, but is regarded as unfair by Catholics.

and concubines (Synod of Melfi, 1189) who by the very fact of their unlawful connection with a subdeacon or clerk of higher rank *became liable to be seized as slaves* by the overlord." Economic motives therefore (together with the fear of simony) seem to have constituted the mainspring of the Church's action in the problem of celibacy.

Devout Catholics are for the most part loth to admit that in such matters as celibacy the Church acts upon grounds of this "sordid" kind. They prefer to think that the Church is solely moved by considerations of mystical or semi-mystical character. But what "mystical motives" could justify the Church's conduct in tearing from the arms of a legally and *validly* married priest his wife and children to sell them into slavery? Does not such a line of action betray the presence of very material and worldly motives? Yet this policy had *conciliar authorisation* and was not the mere direction of an individual.

When Catholics who believe in the wisdom of clerical celibacy attempt to justify its indefinite continuance, more often than not they adduce reasons which have little weight. They pretend, for instance, that a married priest would be unwilling to administer the sacraments to plague-stricken people, fearing for his own little ones at home. But do not married doctors in like circumstances take such risks? Why should priests be less true to their professional duties than doctors? Again they depict the wives of priests prying into confidential secrets and interfering in parish matters. But did such evils exist during the eleven centuries when priests, or

a large proportion of them, were married? Do such evils exist in the Uniate Catholic Churches where priests are lawfully married today? Again Catholics pretend that missions would be too expensive, or badly cared for, were priests married. Well, the expense of missions is a matter for the generosity of the laity, and if the laity were to fail to supply the necessary funds the responsibility would rest on them and not on the married clergy. Besides if missions were particularly perilous, or unhealthy, calling for priests of very heroic temper, it would be up to such priests as were unmarried to volunteer for them. More serious perhaps is the argument that "the faithful throughout the world would be shocked at any change in the condition of the clergy with respect to celibacy . . . they would dislike any such change." Even this objection is not insuperable. The change would come about gradually, and the people would be carefully educated through edifying propaganda, and prepared for the change. The faithful have had to adjust themselves to the spectacle of *priests riding bicycles;* driving cars; enjoying ring-side seats at boxing bouts; frequenting theatres; and of nuns attending lectures at public schools; voting at Presidential elections; lunching in hotels; and assisting at surgical operations in Catholic hospitals. Nay more, the knowledge that innumerable priests live, and *have to live* alone with housekeepers, not in America alone but in almost every country in the world, has not perturbed Catholic sense of propriety. Why then should the faithful be horrified if an additional development of the kind under discussion were to take place? Must nothing ever be changed in the Church's programme?

There is a type of Catholic mind which pretends that there is no longer a "problem of celibacy," that the Church discovered long since the *final* solution of the clerical situation. This view is latent in a letter written by "A Paulist Father" to the *Atlantic Monthly* (April, 1928) apropos of a series of articles published by an anonymous priest, in which the problem of celibacy was briefly alluded to. "I venture," wrote the Paulist Father, "that I have met more priests than 'Anonymous' and can honestly say that the burden of celibacy is the last thing on their minds. The major difficulty is securing a good housekeeper who can cook and at the same time close her ears and shut her mouth to parish gossip." It would be well for priests if it were as the Paulist Father affirms, but unfortunately many priests find it less easy to be adjusted to sex-starvation than to be adjusted to bad cooking. It is quite obviously affectation to pretend that the sacrament of Holy Orders, *plus* clerical garb, automatically removes the most troublesome burden that man in virtue of his makeup is fated to bear.

That there is a problem of celibacy is only too evident. One has but to observe the happenings in a parish when an attractive young priest is appointed to a curacy to realise this fact. Does not his presence cause a veritable flutter of excitement among pious young females? Does he not become the object of a semi-religious, romantic siege? Compliments, presents, invitations, sentimental attentions of a hundred kinds are showered upon him, and is there not outrageous encouragement given him by young girls to flirt? Fac-

ing facts coldly and dispassionately, is not his unmarried state a source of danger to himself and to others? Would not a devoted wife, and a few children, be *a protection for him?* Would not the fathers of the devout emotional girls who hang about the Vestry be glad of it? Such is but one of the many possible situations which bear witness to the existence of a problem of celibacy.

Let us take the case of a young priest living in a country district, alone perhaps with a young housekeeper, where there is not much work to be done save on Saturdays and Sundays. He may make a noble resolution to study and read, but as time goes on he forgets about it, and looks around for means to while away the time. He is weary of waiting for promotion to some busy centre where he will find more to do. He is lonely and begins to drink a little. Is celibacy no problem for him? And is his case a rare one? Is it not true that most priests have to live through such situations at some time or other of their lives? And do they not suffer serious nerve-strain therefrom? *Do they not find that celibacy is a hygienic problem, as well as a moral problem?* Does it not cross the mind of every priest at some such time that "it is not good for man to live alone"? That he would be no less virtuous, much happier, and of more use socially and economically to his country if he were suitably married?

Would the health of priests be better and would the work of the Church be more efficiently carried out if priests were free to marry? To the first part of this question an affirmative answer should at once be given.

The frequent nervous break-downs from which priests suffer are unquestionably to be connected with the strain involved in the life-long asceticism of celibacy; the struggle to repress sex. In addition priests would be better cared for, would be induced to keep more regular hours as regards food and sleep, were they happily married.

The second part of the question, namely, whether the work of the Church would be more efficiently carried out by married than by unmarried priests, also demands an affirmative answer. There would be a stronger natural incentive for priests to preach well, and make a success of their parishes if the comfort and prosperity of their family were dependent upon their so doing. Actually many priests are lazy and let things drift because they lack *natural* incentives. Like other men, priests crave to be loved and looked up to by some that they may lawfully call their own, and if such love and trust is denied them they drift into selfish cynicism. As I said, at the beginning of this chapter, the minds of Catholics today are open to these considerations, and they only require to understand a little more fully the difficulties and disappointments of their priests in order to be ready actively to participate in having things righted. Were celibacy a sure high-road to sanctity lay Catholics might be disinclined to interfere, but the more they understand that *in itself celibacy has little or nothing to say to sanctity, that it is merely a form of asceticism or self-denial,* they will not allow themselves to cling sentimentally to the idea of "celibate priests."

A departure from ecclesiastical tradition and Canon

Law that was in itself more sensational than would have been the abrogation of celibacy was witnessed during the Great War. Priests were authorised to fight, gun in hand, in the trenches. French priests in particular took their places side by side with other *poilus* and shot and bombed and bayoneted their fellow-men. They fought as they claimed not for the glory of their religion alone but also for the love of their country. That the Catholic mind stood the test of adapting itself to the idea of priests shedding human blood, for partly natural motives, should be an index to its capacity of adapting itself to the idea of priests begetting children in lawful and duly sanctioned wedlock. Priests no doubt had distinguished precedents for participating in warfare. Bishops and even Popes like Julius II had donned armour in times gone by. They would have, however, more abundant and even more unexceptional precedents in the lives of the Saints of the early Church for marrying. Perhaps too, a married clergy would, to use Father Tyrrell's phrase drawn from another context, bring the Church "closer to life," and render it "truer in practice."

It is said that while the Council of Trent was still in session, Pope St. Pius V was strongly in favour of relaxing the law of celibacy. He had been urged thereto by Ferdinand, the Emperor Maximilian, and other great Catholic potentates. He was, however, too weak to withstand the arguments of his worldly Cardinals who feared that any relaxation of celibacy would bring economic chaos on the Church. It is a sad story that so many hundreds of thousands of priests since that day have had to suffer on account of the sordid outlook

on life of Italian Princes of the Church. From Virgil the question comes; "What dost thou not drive the heart of man to, thou accursed lust of gold?" (Quid non mortalia pectora cogic auri sacra fames?)

If the problem of celibacy is to be solved within a reasonable span of time, it must be through the efforts of the Catholics of America. Owing to Rome's economic dependence upon this country she is more apt to listen to the representations of American Catholics than to those of any others. Also she will more easily understand, from a consideration of American conditions, how difficult if not impossible it is to establish harmony between celibacy and modern life. Social, hygienic, and economic factors militate against such harmony.

When open discussion of the problem begins, there will no doubt be considerable outcry on the part of conservative and reactionary Catholics. They will complain, as they always do when any change of policy on the part of Rome is called for, that the Church is being *insulted*. They will accuse all who advocate a modification of celibacy of being bigots, Freemasons, and atheists. Unfortunately the priests who know best of all the urgency of the problem will perforce keep silence, fearing unpleasant repercussions. The onus therefore of launching a movement in the direction of this much-needed reform must fall on the shoulders of such as are prepared to suffer and be misunderstood for the good of the Church.

CHAPTER XII

MOTHER CHURCH—IN AMERICA

FREE use is being made of late of the expression, American Catholic Church, and the suggestion of its otherness, its distinctiveness from the Roman Catholic Church is working in the public mind. Even those who considered the learned argument of Mr. Charles C. Marshall [1] above their heads have gleaned from the controversy it aroused the idea that Catholics in this country are flirting with doctrines of which Rome disapproves. Alarmists have gone so far as to affirm that there is a widening breach between the Catholic Church in the United States and the Catholic Church as it exists in Europe. A leading Protestant journal, the *Congregationalist*, has voiced the opinion that "here in America Roman Catholic authority, theory and practice are being profoundly modified—so much so that it becomes apparent that there is developing in this country a Catholicism that, except in its historic associations and its formal connections, is more American than Roman." Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, sums up the situation in a few words: "Ultramontanism is in this country a lost cause."

[1] "The Roman Catholic Church in the Modern State," by C. C. Marshall.

Has it, then, come to pass that the dark foreboding of Leo XIII is realised? Has the fear which he expressed as far back as 1899, in a letter to the American Bishops, come true—the fear that among American Catholics there exists a desire for a Church different from the Church as it exists throughout the world? Is Americanism, the bugaboo of every Italian professor of theology from Milan to Reggio, a *fait accompli?*

It is too often overlooked that European Catholics have always regarded the Catholic Church of this country with a considerable amount of suspicion, not unmixed with disdain. They have been sparing in their commendations of the theological and devotional writings of American Catholics. They have deplored the lack of that fine sense of Roman tradition which, in things ecclesiastical, corresponds to that culture in things profane that Oxford and Cambridge boast of imparting. They look in vain for a Salamanca, a Louvain, a *Seminario Romano* in America, and they refuse to concede that Woodstock or Dunwoody are nurseries of solid theology. They admire, though not without misgivings, the gigantic enterprise in building and organising which characterises American Catholic life. Their misgivings are founded on the recollection of Pius X's rebuke of that Americanism which regards "the *active* virtues as more important than the passive, and as more deserving of encouragement in practice" (*Pascendi Gregis*). They believe that Paul Sabatier was correct in ascribing to American Catholics "a Liberal Catholicism which takes its colour from its surroundings," and they think of all American Catholics as more or less tainted with this Liberalism.

Since the day when Montalembert congratulated American Catholics on "adopting the inevitable conditions of modern society" Rome has grown more and more uneasy about the state of the Church in this country. Although economically dependent upon it, and compliant in conferring minor dignities on American ecclesiastics and laymen, she has been cautious and conservative in her attitude, as though anticipating trouble. She seized upon the Hecker controversy (1889–1899) as a pretext for issuing warnings and distributing rebukes. Not even Cardinal Gibbons was spared. His "imprudence" in opening the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893 was remembered against him. Henceforth, said Leo XIII, no Catholic might take part in mixed religious congresses. In spite of the material and numerical importance of the American Church few American Cardinals have been created. Actually there are but four, as against thirty-six Italians, and if we are to believe Cardinal Mundelein, who on the occasion of his recent visit to Rome was "kept waiting" in ante-chambers, they are not infrequently the recipients of diplomatic discourtesies. Perhaps Rome feels, as *L'Europe Nouvelle* (July 16, 1927) expressed it, that "American Catholics (great and small) consider themselves emancipated from mediæval traditions."

It is only a trifling matter, but it is not without its effect in creating in Europe a mildly lurid idea of American ecclesiasticism, that in such places as Louvain and Rome, where American seminarists are to be found, they soon become conspicuous for their disregard of the decorous deportment required of European stu-

dents of theology. Boys from Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, finding themselves buckled to the ankles in long woollen cassocks, indoors and out, delight in shocking their pious brethren by performing acrobatic feats, little in harmony with the Latin idea of modesty. The strange *Americani* go even further. They demand the right to swim in the lakes, to play football, and even, to the undisguised horror of their fellow-students, to appraise the muscular development of *nude* gladiators and disc-throwers! When the present writer was at Louvain he was witness to a veritable panic of disedification among Continental seminarists, occasioned by the fact that three young American religious (one of them the present editor of *America*) had travelled from the States to Louvain *via* Madrid instead of coming, as befitted holy men, as the crow flies. In such trivialities one finds a tolerable index of the reaction of conservative ecclesiastical Europe to the anti-traditionalism of American Catholics.

One cannot see in its true perspective that quality inherent in the Catholic Church of this country that has been called Americanism unless one take at least a summary view of the development of the Church in our midst.

Until the third decade of the Nineteenth Century, Catholics comprised little above 2 per cent of the population, and were a negligible factor in the communal life, but from 1830 onward their numbers increased rapidly, thanks to immigration. For a long period the Church was disorganised and incapable of coping with the situation created by the arrival of innumerable

poor, uneducated, European Catholics, who spoke strange languages and brought with them their native customs, and not a few superstitious practices. In the middle of the century Catholicism was little in favour and suffered from the hostility of the American Party and the Know Nothing movement.

But with incredible speed a vast, highly organised Church emerged, consisting of a hundred bishops, twenty-five thousand priests, and twenty million adherents, controlling several thousand churches, schools, halls, hospitals and orphan asylums, and a few hundred journals. From a sense of inferiority, Catholics have passed to a reaction, resembling a sense of superiority. They have set afoot multi-membered clubs and associations that boast of gigantic material resources and very considerable political power. Having emerged, they sense their freedom. They are naturally grateful to the Constitution which made it possible for them to find themselves, and which protects their interests. Though as a body deeply devoted to their Church, they have no considerable acquaintance with her history, nor with those Catholic politico-theological principles which occupy largely the minds of educated European Catholics. They see in the American Constitution a good and a just law, and they glory in it. They have never experienced any conflict between the practice of their religion and the Constitution, and they are reluctant to believe that any such conflict is in the region of possibility.

Having this background in view, one can readily understand why the first salient feature of American Catholicism (the Catholicism of Gibbons, Ireland,

Keane, O'Connell, O'Gorman, Kain, and Alfred E. Smith) should be what amounts to a veritable religious faith in the American ideal of democracy. This faith found its most striking illustration in the chorus of Catholic applause which greeted the publication in the *Atlantic Monthly* of Governor Smith's politico-religious *credo*. Catholics, lay and clerical, accepted his exposition of Catholicism as the expression of their own cherished convictions. No Catholic ventured to protest or to question its orthodoxy; no bishop uttered a syllable of criticism. Catholic theologians vied with each other in defending it, and it was registered in Catholic minds as ecclesiastically approved. Nevertheless, in that *credo* there were many very daring statements; there were declarations concerning equality of religions, freedom of conscience, non-interference of the Church, freedom of education and so forth which, while thoroughly in consonance with American ideals of democracy, were much less clearly in consonance with the Vatican Decrees and certain teachings of Pius IX's Syllabus.

Even though Mr. Belloc had written that "the Catholic Church in its root principles is at issue with the civic definition both of freedom and authority" and had foretold the inevitability of trouble between Church and State in America, even though Pius XI was, at the very moment of the appearance of Governor Smith's letter, at grips with political questions in France, Italy, and Mexico, the American Catholic body as a whole, lay and clerical, swallowed joyously and unhesitatingly the theory of Papal Domesticity and the separation of Church and State.

In contrast to this first salient feature of American

Catholicism, namely, its faith in democracy, we have a second no less characteristic feature which seems strangely out of harmony with the spirit of democracy. I refer to the tendency of the American Catholic Church to display its power, together with its belief in the wisdom and righteousness of so doing.

One need only recall to mind the nation-wide Catholic effort (which was, indeed, in its way a triumphant success) to stage a stupendous, public, religious ceremony in Chicago, the Eucharistic Congress, in order to realise that American Catholics believe in showing their strength. In Washington and at Hollywood similar displays have been held, and it may be of interest to quote from a Catholic paper, the *Catholic News* (June 2, 1928), a brief description of the latter display, which was organised by the Knights of Columbus:

> More than 30,000 visitors gathered in Hollywood. The streets and boulevards were decorated with the national and papal colors, and the city was swept with enthusiasm. . . . The opening event was a solemn Pontifical Mass in the great Hollywood Bowl, with 18,000 attending. . . . In the huge amphitheatre surrounded by lofty hills a towering cross had been planted upon the highest eminence. . . . Fronting 20,000 seats on the immense stage was erected a beautiful altar flanked and backed by great pillars and thrones decorated profusely.

In all such displays emphasis is laid on the material elements of greatness: numbers, rich trappings, gigantic expenditures, and so forth. But apart from the actual displays the wisdom of revealing Catholic strength is preached. Thus, in June last, addressing a congress of 1,500 Catholic representatives of the press, Cardinal Hayes spoke as follows:

If you can present in a courteous manner the majesty, the dignity, the power and the growth of Catholic life, then you are doing something that is praiseworthy and important. Your exposition of Catholic thought and action can be done with a reserve and a restraint that will be indicative of your power and *the power of the Church.*

In a similar vein, the Archbishop of San Francisco announced the organisation of the National Catholic Welfare Council in 1921:

In eight months we have coördinated and united *the Catholic power* of this country. It now knows where and when to act and is encouraged by the consciousness of its unity. *We feel ourselves powerful because our reunion has become visible.* All Catholic organizations report an increase of energy and do not doubt that, thanks to the N. C. W. C., we can bring Catholic coöperation to its apogee.

Meanwhile, the Catholic press delights to flatter the palates of Catholic readers by reminding them of this power, and of the vastness of Catholic achievements. Thus, in the same issue of the *Catholic News* which records Cardinal Hayes' message quoted above, we read: "It is the Catholic contribution which has enabled the United States to take the world's leadership in the field [of education]." Again: "The Catholic Church is the greatest corporate society in the world. . . . [It] is more extensive and has more subjects than the United States Government." No doubt the effect of so much emphasis on power—especially Catholic American power—is to enhance the American Catholic's sense of pride and independence in all directions, not only *vis-à-vis* of other Churches, but even of Rome!

It may not be out of place at this point to inquire into the reason of this self-assertiveness, amounting sometimes to a form of combativeness,—this pronounced affirmation of power which we have been considering. I have said above that "from a sense of inferiority American Catholics have passed to a reaction, resembling a sense of superiority." But the superiority does not ring true. There is, as any psychoanalyst can detect, an ambivalent inferiority that is still stronger. The truth of the matter is that Catholics are acutely conscious of being, in some degree, unpopular. They feel that many are ill-disposed toward them—that in many there is an unjustifiable hostility against them. This feeling found ample confirmation in the recent Presidential campaign.

How do Catholics explain this fact? Most of them, taking their cue from Cardinal Gibbons, assert that the Church is "the victim of the foulest slanders," that "upon her fair and heavenly brow her enemies have put a hideous mask," that there exists a hatred of Catholicism based upon the misrepresentations of centuries of inherited dislike. Other Catholics there are, more supernatural in outlook, who hold that dislike of Catholicism originates in the fact that "the truth of the Church" stands as a reproach to unbelievers—that the Church is hated and rejected through "obstinacy." This opinion, however, rests upon the assumption that "the truth of the Church is self-evident," a theory which is not widely admitted in this country.

The reasons given by non-Catholics for their dislike of Catholicism are very different. Non-Catholics are naturally unwilling to admit the existence in their

minds of either "inherited hatred" or "obstinacy." They confess, however, to finding it irritating to see papal flags and papal titles flaunted in America. They resent such incidents as the halting of the Lindbergh procession before St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, and the highly official reception given to Cardinal Bonzano in the Municipal Building on June 17, 1926. They found it objectionable that, as the Freethinkers' Protest expressed it, "the Alderman's Chamber should have been converted into a Catholic Cathedral." All such matters are perhaps trifling in themselves, but they are none the less pregnant of provocation.

A more serious reason for the unpopularity of Catholicism in this country is the fact that there is no give and take with the Catholic Church. It will not meet the other Churches half-way, and above all, will not tolerate criticism. "The Church bears criticism very badly," said the Editor of the *American Mercury*. The Church hits back when criticised, said Mr. Heywood Broun, or to put it in his precise words, "There is not a single New York editor who does not live in terror of this group" (*The Nation*, May 9, 1928). One could without difficulty multiply examples of characteristic Catholic resentment in the face of anything said or written to the apparent detriment of the Church. Mr. Charles C. Marshall's just and impartial study of the political philosophy of Rome was dubbed by a Paulist Father, in the *Catholic World*, "a raking up from the gutters of history the muck of past scandals." When the *Atlantic Monthly* threw open its pages to a discussion by a priest of certain questionable policies and methods of Rome, the Catholic Bishop of North Dakota

protested that "to cause discussions on matters of our Holy Catholic Church . . . in the *Atlantic* is about as wise and appropriate as having such debates in an old-fashioned saloon, the debaters fortified by jugs of beer or something stronger. *I suspect every secular paper that adopts such methods as being guided by commercial, or sensational or anti-Christian motives.*"

Even when a critic of Catholicism confines himself (as did Mr. Marshall almost wholly) to citations from distinguished Catholics and Popes, he is no less rudely belaboured by the Catholic press. Were he to suggest as a reason for this bearishness what Mr. Michael Williams, "the most influential lay-Catholic of America," frankly admits, namely, "the low cultural level" among Catholics, he would be all the more heartily thwacked.

Catholic popularity suffers further wreckage in a certain lack of tactfulness among her apologists. In order to glorify Catholicism, fictions that are annoying to non-Catholic Americans, such as that which makes of Jefferson a plagiarist of the Jesuit Bellarmine, are trotted out. Thus, at Detroit, in October 1927, Cardinal Hayes, no doubt with perfect sincerity, but none the less hurtingly, amplified the exploded theory. "The Virginia Bill of Rights," declared His Eminence, "was taken almost *verbatim* from the writings of the Venerable Robert Bellarmine. . . . The principles, almost the very language of the Declaration of Independence were written by the Venerable Bellarmine." The line of thought behind propaganda of this kind is provoking to non-Catholics; it amounts, in a word, to the principle that all good emanates from Rome.

Another element of tactlessness in Catholic propa-

ganda in this country is the emphasising, to the detriment of non-Catholics, of the freedom that Catholics (supposedly) enjoy. No one likes to be told that he is relatively a slave, least of all an American non-Catholic. But what do we find? We have not only Mr. Williams boasting that "we Catholics are the freest minds among mankind," but we have sermons such as the following by a Jesuit, Father Lockington, circulated in thousands:

> When I visited America some years ago as our vessel passed under the shadow of the magnificent Statue of Liberty, that stands at the gateway of the Queen City of this mighty Continent, an American gentleman beside me pointed with pride to the colossal figure. "There," he said, "is America's monument of Liberty, telling all that freedom is the birth-right of every American citizen." My dear friends, as I came to know America better, I saw that that statue standing in the water was not her true monument of Liberty. The monument of Liberty of America, the monument telling of true Liberty, is the monument of Liberty that dominates the whole city of New York—the mighty Cathedral of St. Patrick's.

From such isolated instances one may not of course conclude that all Catholic propaganda is ill-conceived. Neither may one conclude from isolated cases of Catholic resentment at criticism that all literary Catholics are bears. It would be absurd to do so. But in seeking for the causes of the unquestioned animosity of great numbers of Americans toward Catholicism one feels justified in indicating, as a likely factor, a wrong method of approach, on the part of responsible Catholics, to the American people. Catholics themselves feel that, as Catholics, they do not hit it off with the bulk of the people. And it may well be that the reason is a corporate lack of tact in propaganda.

Although the average American sees in the Catholic Church of this country a pretty accurate and complete replica of that complexus of beliefs and practices which he classifies as Romanism, European Catholics visiting America sense a distinctiveness, an otherness about American Catholicism. No doubt all the essentials of Catholicism are the same: mass, confession, communion, and so forth. But there is a difference of spirit, a novel attitude towards the world, a strangeness in methods of propaganda and church administration—above all, a marked lack of traditionalism. Things are done and said here in the name of the Church which are neither done nor said in the name of the Church in Europe.

Recently, at Omaha, Bishop Rummel, addressing himself to Catholic women teachers, spoke as follows: "As citizens of the United States you have a right to vote *whether you wear religious garb or not.* It is a wise thing to exercise that right, not only this year but every year." By these words he publicly authorised the nuns of his diocese to register and vote. This advice naturally implied the advice to keep *au courant* with political events, "not only this year but every year." In other words, he told them that it was *wiser* for them to adapt themselves to the political exigencies of the times, than to persevere in their traditional holy seclusion. Elsewhere in America other Bishops gave similar advice to nuns, thus repudiating all the stored up religious traditions and canonical enactments of a thousand years. Nuns who before had feared to glance through a window lest they should violate "holy Rule"

by taking an interest in the world, must now study political platforms!

Now for another example of American Catholic distinctiveness. In January last, a prominent New York priest, Father Francis P. Duffy, made an address in public that attracted the notice of the press. He said: "If the Pope were a civil ruler and waged war on the United States, I would take up arms against him, and the Sixty-ninth Regiment [of which Father Duffy is the chaplain] would be the first to combat him." This statement might have been regarded as a purely personal one were it not followed some months later by a still stronger announcement by Bishop Noll at Washington. "One hundred years ago," he declared, "John England, the first Catholic Bishop of Charleston wrote: 'Let the Pope and Cardinals and all the powers of the Catholic world united make the least encroachment on the Constitution, we will protect it with our lives. Summon a General Council. Let the Council interfere in the mode of our electing but an assistant to a turnkey in a prison. We deny its right. We reject its usurpation.' " It should be noted that Bishop England's declaration was made long before the Vatican Decrees and the promulgation of the dogma of papal infallibility. Nevertheless, Bishop Noll quoted it with approval, as though conditions had not been changed by Rome since that time. This flourishing of the Stars and Stripes in the face of the Pope—the advantage of which is not at all obvious—is distinctively American Catholic.

On the question of the temporal power of the Pope

—the eternal Roman question—if we are to believe Mr. Michael Williams,[1] "the overwhelming [Catholic] American doctrine" is "firmly against the resumption of the Pope's acknowledged place as head of a state." However creditable to the political wisdom of American Catholics this view may be, it is in distinct disaccord with Roman feeling and Roman teaching. No less so is the common attitude of American Catholics, lay and clerical, toward the binding force of papal encyclicals. Except in so far as they are nullifiable (hypothetically), encyclicals, for Roman Catholics, have the same binding force on mind and will as infallible decrees. But for the average American Catholic they are, to use Mr. Williams' phrase, merely "considered opinions of an individual Pope, . . . not always or of necessity laying down binding laws of the Church." This tendency of American Catholics in the direction of minimising the authority of papal encyclicals has resulted in an exceedingly ironical situation, namely, in a demand made by the Rev. Dr. P. J. Healey, dean of the theological faculty of the Catholic University, that Mr. Marshall should *demonstrate* that the Vatican Decrees and other papal enactments were "intended to apply to American conditions!" Truly, as Mr. Sedgwick remarked, "ultramontanism is in this country a lost cause."

Perhaps the most fundamental difference, however, which exists between the American Catholic and his European brother lies in the comparative indifference which the former displays toward dogma. Apparently he is satisfied to practise his religion and derive spiritual comfort therefrom. He is little concerned with

[1] "Catholicism and the Modern Mind."

theological notions or with the metaphysical background thereof. This indifference to dogma leaves him wholly unaware of the fact that in espousing democracy with such ardour, and in interpreting Catholicism in terms of democracy as he does, he has come perilously near aligning himself with the Modernists. Their fundamental heresy was that they sought to force Catholicism into the mould of modern science, to interpret it in terms of modern science. This was "novelty" for Pius X, and in condemning them he cried pathetically, "Far, far from the clergy be the love of novelty." But the new American interpretation of Catholicism, the identifying it with the corner-stone of the American Constitution, is hardly less of a novelty than the wildest aberrations of Tyrrell or Loisy.

In regions proximate to the practice of Catholicism in this country we find again an American Catholic way which would surprise, if not shock, a European. We find the most delicate and exotic forms of Catholic piety paraded before the public—given the utmost publicity—and managed in a "big business" spirit, which seems strangely out of place.

Among the lower ranks of the American clergy there is avowed dislike of all things tending toward the Italianising of the Church in this country. There are signs of jealousy of Roman interference, an inclination perhaps to attach something short of their due importance to mandates and *motu proprios* from Rome. Nationalism, while not being openly avowed, is latent in the attitude of these priests. At Scranton it took its extremest form when Polish Catholics set up an independent American Catholic Church and severed their

connection with Rome. It would be too much to say that the Scranton spirit is shared by a considerable portion of the clergy, for among them in general there is at least a sentimental attachment to Rome and to the Pope, but on the other hand there is a strong and widespread desire for a thoroughly Americanised Church. Whether this ideal will ever be realised in a canonically established American Church similar to the Gallican Church of the seventeenth century, or whether Rome would prefer to let America go rather than submit to the indignity of a Gallican compromise, remains to be seen.

It is not possible to doubt that the Holy See disapproves of the stand taken up by Governor Smith and the Catholics, lay and clerical, of this country on the question of the relationship between the Church and the State. Already in January, 1928, the Pope issued his reply to Governor Smith's *credo* by emphatically reaffirming the Vatican Decrees. But in spite of this diplomatic hint the American bishops have not receded one inch from the position they took in support of Governor Smith, nor have they issued any repudiation of his doctrines. Implicitly they, like he, "relegate to the limbo of defunct controversy" the decrees that Pius XI insists upon. We find the Rev. Dr. Guilday, professor of church history at the Catholic University, describing Governor Smith on the eve of the late election, in the most authoritative Catholic paper in the country (*The Catholic News*, October 27) as "a great Catholic citizen." Two days later we find Governor Smith reaffirming his doctrine, this time at Baltimore under the eyes

of Archbishop Curley. "I repeat—my firm adherence to *the American doctrine of the absolute separation of Church and State.*" [Applause.]

Were a "great Catholic citizen" to make a like statement in London under the eyes of Cardinal Bourne, or in Paris under the eyes of Cardinal Dubois, and were these Cardinals publicly to approve his statement and allow their Catholic subjects to consider it as orthodox doctrine, what would Rome do or say about it?

The defeat that Governor Smith suffered in November 1928, in no way mitigates the seriousness of the crisis which faces the Catholic Church; if anything it intensifies it. He carried with him, as far as one can judge, 95 per cent of the Catholic vote, and in every Catholic vote cast for him there was an implicit endorsement of his *credo*, and to no little extent a challenge to Rome. For the first time in history a great Catholic popular vote has been freely, conscientiously and independently taken by the bishops, priests, religious, and lay Catholics of a nation on an issue which clearly involved papal claims. And the result was, as I say, 95 to 5 in favour of "the American doctrine of absolute separation of Church and State."

Though, from the standpoint of the Electoral College, Governor Smith's defeat was overwhelming, his popular vote was so large and his personal popularity was so unequivocally demonstrated that Rome will foresee the likelihood of another Smith-Hoover contest in some years to come. And she will have fears lest the next Catholic candidate for the Presidency will yield

even more ground, will wander even farther in to the morass of heresy, than Governor Smith.

To check this Catholic landslide from the conservatism of the Vatican Decrees, Pius XI will have to act quickly and firmly. He has no choice but to administer a sharp rebuke to his recalcitrant American children, and to assert his authority. No doubt he will wait a little while until the election heat has cooled down. Perhaps too his rebuke will be indirect; there may be no mention of America at all in his encyclical, but every one will know for whom it is intended.

Will the American Catholics, lay and clerical, submit to a papal rebuke? Will they repudiate the popular, liberal *credo* of Governor Smith that they hailed with so much fervour a short while back? They will *perhaps* profess their readiness to submit, but the step they have already taken is irrevocable: they can never again *think* in harmony with the doctrines of Pius IX and Leo XIII.

CHAPTER XIII

THE "BLACK POPE"

READERS of this book, however sympathetic, will harbour in their minds a challenge that I should adduce at least one recent and important instance of a break-down of Roman authority as evidence of my thesis that "Peter sleeps." The challenge is a fair one, and must naturally be complied with.

The case I select as satisfying all just requirements, and as best proving my thesis, is known at Rome as *The Mungret Case*. It was a struggle for supremacy between the authority of the Holy See (as exercised by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda) and the Society of Jesus. It resulted in the defeat and humiliation of the "White Pope" (the Holy Father) at the hands of the "Black Pope," the Jesuit General. It betrayed the inherent weakness of Roman administration, and the existence of a power lurking in the shadow of the Vatican, which could afford to ignore and disobey, openly and incontinently, a decree of the highest Court of Rome, countersigned by the Holy Father himself. Such in brief was the significance of "The Mungret Case," the history of which I shall proceed to relate.

Some forty-five years ago an Irish Jesuit, William Ronan by name, came to America in order to collect funds for the establishment of a missionary college in

Ireland. He was well received by the Catholics of this country and in a short time collected upwards of $200,000. He pledged himself to spend the money in training young priests for the foreign missions, and painted a glowing picture of heroic and scholarly missionaries from Ireland fighting for the cause of Catholicism in America.

Having returned to Ireland he leased an estate called *Mungret* (near Limerick) and opened his college, staffing it with brother Jesuits. At first the American money was placed in the hands of trustees; one was Sir Aubrey de Vere a distinguished Catholic poet; another was a Catholic peer, Lord Emly, both of whom resided near Mungret. Before long the situation at Mungret developed. There was now a Jesuit college for lay students side by side with the Apostolic (the missionary) college and *the American trust fund was being expended on lay-boys* (not destined for the priesthood) *and apostolic students alike.* Furthermore all the money had found its way into the hands of the Jesuits.

Incontrovertible evidence of this situation is found in British *Blue Books* [1] consequent on the setting afoot of an inquiry by the Irish Commissioners of Education. The inquiry, held before the distinguished Irish Judge, Lord Fitzgibbon, in October 1887, evoked from the acting Jesuit Superior of Mungret College the following significant answer: "It would be utterly impossible to carry on the (lay) school in Mungret *only for the*

[1] "Reports of Commissioners of Educational Endowments," Vols. 29, 30. In Archives, Kildare Str. Library, Dublin. It should be noted that the purpose of this Governmental inquiry had to do with the education given to the lay-boys at Mungret, and not with the ecclesiastical question at issue in this chapter.

support we receive from the revenues of the Apostolic school. . . . We would run $2,500 to $3,000 each year in debt if we were depending on the lay boys. It is quite unfair to say we are supporting the boys for the foreign missions out of the public funds. *On the contrary it is these boys that enable us to support the (lay) school for the Catholic laity of Limerick.*" Here we have the clear though inadvertent admission on the part of the Jesuit Superior himself, made at a sworn public inquiry, that the Society of Jesus was consciously and deliberately misapplying trust funds received from America. That the Jesuits were known to be mere trustees of this money is evident from the remark made at the same inquiry by the Catholic Bishop of Limerick, Dr. O'Dwyer. "The Jesuits are really only trustees there [at Mungret] for the Catholic body."

Not only did the Jesuits continue to spend a large sum of trust money every year on their lay school, but they began to foster the latter at the expense of the Apostolic school, and to neglect the missionary students. Things reached such a pass that the Bishop of Limerick, above referred to, appealed to Rome. From Rome came a decision of Propaganda, dated January 19, 1904, insisting upon the "nature and scope" of the Apostolic school being safeguarded.

Years passed, and at length (1913) there came to be appointed as Jesuit Superior over the Apostolic part of Mungret, a very remarkable man, by name James Tomkin. He had himself been a pupil at Mungret when a boy, having at the time as playmate the present Arch-

bishop of Baltimore, Dr. Michael Curley. Father Tomkin, was possessed of great simplicity of purpose and of a will of iron. Furthermore he was an idealist. In joining the Society of Jesus he had taken it for granted that the one and only purpose of the great Order was the Glory of God. He had taken it for granted that the Society of Jesus would not and could not persist in doing an injustice. Hence, when, as Superior of the Apostolics, he came to study the history of the endowment of Mungret, and perceived that the Society of Jesus had acted irregularly as regards the administration of trust money, he believed that he had only to point the matter out to Superiors and that all would be rectified. He made due and respectful representations to his Superiors. He proved that the buildings and property of Mungret belonged to the Apostolic school, and he showed that though this was so, the Apostolics, the rightful owners, were mere slaves, ill-fed, ill-taught, and ill-used in their own home. His Jesuit Superiors refused to listen to his complaints. But they misjudged the character of the man they had to deal with. Tomkin's heroic will was enlisted in the cause of justice and he was determined to have the affair attended to, cost what it would. Writing at this period, January 19, 1920, to a friend in Rome he said: "If I had any reasonable hope that matters would be settled by the Society herself I should never appeal to Rome. But I have no hope. I have appealed repeatedly to the Superiors at Mungret. I have appealed year after year to the Provincial. I appealed to the late [Jesuit] General, Father Wernz. I appealed as I told you to the present General and from the way things are still going in the school

[Mungret] I feel convinced no fair play will be shown to the Apostolics unless the Church interferes."

The letter "to the present General," Father Ledekowski, still "Black Pope" and General of the Society of Jesus, is unfortunately too long to quote in full. A little of it, however, may be given with advantage. It was written in very poor Latin and dated April 3, 1919.

"Very Reverend Father,

My name is James Tomkin, the office I hold is that of Moderator of Mungret Apostolic School. I have held it for six years (1913–1919). Now the Apostolic school, which was formerly here in Mungret College is dead. For; (1) Its end is changed; (2) Its spirit is destroyed; (3) Its students are crushed (franguntur, broken).

"The end of the Church and the intentions of the benefactors of this college as regards the education and spiritual formation of the students is not even considered . . . as regards the corporal punishments and vituperation employed in driving the pupils to study . . . suffice it to say that it is more what belongs to the treatment of brute beasts and slaves than men. The Apostolic students are compelled to act as guards (prefects) over 150 lay-boys in their study-hall, their games, and their recreation. . . . The whole Apostolic school, its buildings, its pupils, its educational system, is subordinated to the lay-school and the public examinations. A large part of the Apostolic school is out-of-bounds for the Apostolics and given wholly over to lay-boys. *This occupancy (by lay-boys) seems to me to be unjust because this Apostolic school was intended by the benefactors for the exclusive use of the Apostolics, and was built for that purpose. . . .*"

This letter, which developed and proved all the points referred to, was completely ignored by the Jesuit General. Its only result was that the writer, Father Tomkin, was penalised. He was removed from Mungret College

to a most lonely and inaccessible place in Ireland, called Tullabeg.

It would take too long to tell, though indeed the story is sufficiently thrilling, how from Tullabeg, by his letters, James Tomkin set to work to bring the highest authority of the Church to bear on the Mungret problem. Friendless, and without money, but strong in his desire for justice, Father Tomkin gradually built up a powerful movement, extending throughout Ireland, Italy and America, and set Rome agog with the story of the Mungret "atrocities." In spite of all the power and diplomatic skill of the Society of Jesus, the Mungret question could not be suppressed. It saw light—a solemn ecclesiastical trial of the case (the dream of Father Tomkin) was held by the Court of Propaganda at Rome.

When the Society of Jesus began to realise the strength of the movement against them in Rome, during the trial, they sent a special investigator, a Dutch Jesuit, Father Von Decker to Ireland to look into the Mungret affair and draw up a "defence." But when Father Von Decker returned to Rome he carried with him grave news for the Jesuit General. He told him that no "defence" was possible . . . that the Jesuit conduct in the matter had been atrocious . . . and he counselled surrender. But "surrender" is a word that has no meaning for the "Black Pope." Seeing that a legitimate defence was impossible he had recourse to other means, the outcome of which will appear in due course.

The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda before which the trial of *The Mungret Case* took place is one

of the oldest, and perhaps the most powerful of the Roman Congregations. It was founded, in its modern form, by Gregory XV in 1622, and enjoys a wider jurisdiction than any other congregation in Rome. Its head, the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, is called the "Red Pope," and his Court is the highest in the Curia. Propaganda (Congregatio de Propaganda Fide) amongst other duties takes charge of all that touches on Missionary colleges, and also of all cases affecting religious, considered as missionaries. Its present Prefect, Cardinal William Van Rossum, was himself a religious. Its present Secretary is Mgr. Francis Marchetti Selvaggiani, Archbishop of Seleucia d'Isauria. The expenses of the Court are defrayed by a tax called the "ring-tax" (tassa dell' anello) assessed on each newly appointed Cardinal. The Palace of Propaganda is a massive structure on the Piazza di Spagna. The title of the Congregation and its Arms are cut in stone, high over its great carved portal.

It was here that on May 23, 1921, at a plenary session of the Court of Cardinals, the fateful decision concerning Mungret College was taken. For about two years, secretaries and members of the Court had been studying and reducing to legal form the mass of documents and affidavits connected with the case. These documents and affidavits comprised the history of Mungret College; proofs of the intentions of the founder; proofs of maladministration of the trust funds by members of the Society of Jesus; and lastly sworn statements by ecclesiastical students relative to the hardships they had suffered while in Mungret. In addition there was the defence set up by the Society of Jesus against the

charges brought against them to the effect that there had been glaring irregularities in the administration of the trust funds of Mungret College. All had been gone into fully and without haste, and now the decree was signed by the full Court of Cardinals, one of whom, Billot, was himself a Jesuit. The Cardinal who presided at the trial, Merry del Val, was selected for the occasion by the Cardinal Prefect on account of his well-known friendship for the Society of Jesus, so as to secure for them a perfectly impartial hearing.

The decree, as copied subsequently from the "*Acta Sanctæ Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*," by His Excellency, Archbishop Fumasoni-Biondi, the present Papal Delegate to the United States, formerly Secretary to the Congregation, reads as follows:

"*Copy of Report and Decree issued in Plenary session of the Sacred Congregation 'De Propaganda Fide,' May 23, 1921.* . . .

"IN Congregatione Generali de Propaganda Fide . . . held on May 23rd. 1921, at which were present the Eminent Cardinals:—Sua Eminenzia Cardinal Vico, Cagliero, Merry del Val, Van Rossum, (Præfectus) Scapinelli, Billot (S.J.), Lega, Gasquet, Marini, Giorgi . . .

"Report, Summary, and Voting with regard to the State of Mungret College, Limerick, Ireland.

"*Question:* If and what provisions are to be taken with regard to the actual situation of Mungret College. . . ."

His Eminence Cardinal Merry del Val, having made his report, the Eminent Patres decided that the answer should be:—

"We re-affirm the necessity to restore to the Apostolic school its true character and scope; and for this we hold it necessary to have a complete separation of the two colleges,

the lay college to be transferred elsewhere. For the execution of this there will be conceded the necessary time, offering to the Company of Jesus any compensation which, after an accurate investigation, may be due to it as a result of expenses made on its own.[1] In the meantime the two Institutions will be kept apart in matters of place, direction, and administration. Ita Est.

(Signed) R. Card. Merry del Val

At an audience had on May 23rd, 1921, His Holiness Benedict XV was kindly pleased to approve of the above-said resolution.

(Signed) C. Laurenti,
Secretary."

The decision of Propaganda gave much satisfaction at Rome where *The Mungret Case* had become a topic of conversation among ecclesiastics. It was commonly said that no clearer or stronger plea for justice had ever been laid before the Curia than that on behalf of Mungret College. The verdict, though mild in form, was perfectly decisive; the lay-college, the bone of contention, was "to be transferred elsewhere." The Apostolic Foundation was to be devoted exclusively, as it always should have been, to the Apostolics and to them alone. The verdict besides carried with it the highest authority of the Holy See; a decree of Propaganda countersigned by the Sovereign Pontiff. It was now the part of the "Black Pope" to display his obedience and loyalty to the "White Pope," and to submit. But would he do so?

The first move of the "Black Pope" was to gain time by having a learned *disquisitio* drawn up, appealing

1 Evidence discovered subsequent to this decree showed conclusively that the Society of Jesus had no just claim on the grounds of "Expenses made on its own."

against the decision. The Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, however, found that it was in no way to the point, and refused to re-open the question. As far as one can make out, the next move of the "Black Pope" was to challenge all Roman authority by deliberately ignoring the decision and Pontifical decree, though meanwhile professing the utmost devotion to the Chair of Peter.

Seven years passed. Still the "Black Pope" ignored the decree. It was time for those interested in the cause of Mungret to take strong action. Among those interested were five American bishops and numerous distinguished American ecclesiastics, all of whom had as boys been educated in Mungret College. They resolved to send a delegate to Rome bearing with him strong protests to the Holy See.

From the letter which His Grace, the Archbishop of Baltimore, Dr. Curley, sent with this delegate (dated Jan. 27, 1928), we quote the following message. "*I am surprised and I need not say that I am shocked at the attitude of the Society of Jesus towards Pontifical Decrees. If the knowledge of the facts ever comes to the public it will cause great scandal.*" Referring to the manner in which the Society of Jesus had victimised Father Tomkin, the Archbishop added: "I am fully aware of the action of the [Jesuit] Provincial in forbidding him [Fr. Tomkin] to write to any of the past pupils of Mungret, *re the Mungret Case.* In other words the Jesuit Superiors have acted in a very stupid, and I should say, in a very unfair way in the whole matter."

Accompanying this strong letter of his Grace of Baltimore went a statement signed by several American ecclesiastics, Chancellors, Vicar-generals and Pastors:

"In union with the Bishops and other ex-alumni of Mungret College, I consider any further delay in the execution of the decree of the Holy See of 1921 a matter of grave injustice. In order to avoid the matter becoming a public scandal *in the whole Church* I am thoroughly with the others in insisting that the case be brought to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion."

Meanwhile, what was the attitude of the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda? Had he perchance played the Holy See false, and given some pretext to the "Black Pope" for not obeying? Fortunately we have to hand a copy of a letter sent from Rome by the delegate of the American clergy, detailing his interview with the Cardinal Prefect Van Rossum, apropos of the decree. The letter was dated April 25, 1928, and reads:

"His Eminence Cardinal Van Rossum, whom I was fortunate to find in active work again after his recent illness, was very short and to the point when I presented my appeal to him in the name of the American bishops and the host of priests who are behind me in this. He simply stated that the decree of 1921, once given, must stand. 'And what about this so-called appeal, Eminenza, which seems to have held up the decree these last seven years?' He seemed annoyed at this, and said with a deprecating gesture; 'Appeals have nothing to do with the matter, we don't consider appeals any one may make; any one can make appeals, but they cannot interfere with the decree.'

"'But, Eminenza,' I persisted, 'we know that and I thank you very much for your assurance, and all we ask is that the decree be put in force. But now, what about the enforcement

of it? That is the question I have been sent here to negotiate about.' He answered, *'What more can I do to enforce it? The Jesuits have had the decree communicated to them, as well as the others and it is their duty to obey. Io non posso mandare i gendarmi,* (I cannot send the policemen to force them).' He thus concluded the interview, instructing me to see Secretary Marchetti next day.

"It is strange, and would be laughable if the matter were not so serious, that when I recounted to Fr. Welsby, S.J. (the Jesuit General's Assistant), the expression of His Eminence about the 'policemen,' he quietly answered. *'Well, let him send his policemen, that is their business. . . .'* All Rome knows of the state of affairs, but laugh up their sleeves, and shrug their shoulders, and say, 'Ma Che? What can you do against the Jesuits?' "

It must not be thought that when Roman Monsignori merely "laugh up their sleeves and shrug their shoulders" there is not question of a grave crisis, and a serious break-down of Papal authority. The same worldly-minded Monsignori would merely "laugh up their sleeves and shrug their shoulders" if the four Gospels were definitely shown to be forgeries concocted by Alexandrine Greeks. Neither should the light-hearted, hypocritical tone of the letter which follows, written to the American delegate at the direction of the "Black Pope" deceive any one. It was by way of reply to Archbishop Curley's condemnation of the Jesuit attitude towards the Holy See.

The letter, signed by the "Black Pope's" Assistant, Joseph Welsby, and dated April 23, 1928 reads:

"It caused Father General no little surprise to learn that the Society is regarded by some as failing in obedience and submission to the Holy See. Quite recently the Holy Father

himself, in an audience granted to Father General, referred with emphasis to one fact which gave His Holiness much satisfaction. This was the obedience and submission of the Society not merely to the decisions of the Holy See but to its least desires."

Comment on this letter is surely superfluous. On one hand American bishops and ecclesiastics, Roman Monsignori, the Cardinals of Propaganda, Papal Diplomats throughout the world all contemplating with disgust and amazement the open contempt with which the Society of Jesus was treating Papal authority . . . and . . . on the other hand . . . the "Black Pope" dictating a letter to his Secretary in which he expresses "*no little surprise*" that even "*some*" should regard the Society of Jesus as failing in "obedience and submission."

Two months pass and the Jesuit General resolves to assert his power to the full. . . . He no longer sees any reason to spare the Holy Father the humiliation of formally rescinding the odious decree of May 1921. Besides the time had come for making the Cardinals of Propaganda bite the dust; they had to be taught the lesson of never again interfering with the Society of Jesus, whatever their so-called jurisdiction might be. Forthwith the "Black Pope" intimates to the Holy Father his *wishes* and without delay (July 9, 1928) a *new decree* is drawn up by the Cardinals of Propaganda and formally ratified by His Holiness. It is the decree that the "Black Pope" insisted upon. Not only is the former ruling against the Society rescinded, and the Society completely exonerated, but it is declared

that "the [Mungret] question both historically and legally . . . *be not a further subject of discussion.*" No one henceforth may, on this head, impugn the honour of the Society of Jesus . . . *needless to say not a word was said about the missing American gold.*

The Mungret Case evolved in the bosom of the Church, and for that reason was less "sensational" than had it evolved in the arena of politics. Be that as it may, it cannot be otherwise interpreted than as "a serious break-down of Papal authority." It reveals unmistakably "a power lurking in the shadow of the Vatican" influential enough "to ignore and disobey, openly and incontinently, decrees of the highest Court of Rome, countersigned by the Holy Father himself."

CHAPTER XIV

PIOUS PRACTICES

AS a rule Catholics fall into line with the "pious practices" in vogue in their parishes, and follow the lead given them by devotees. Being unaccustomed to inquire into and analyse their religion, they allow others to do the *thinking* for them in such matters (if any serious thinking is done?). Unconsciously they confuse "the practices of the faithful" with "the truth of the faith." They shut their eyes to the fact that even in "the one true Church" eccentricity and absurdity in religious practice is possible on a large scale. Should some monstrosity of pietism among their co-religionists be pointed out to them, they resent the criticism as blasphemous, and impute it to incipient atheism, or bigotry.

Never before in her history did the Church shelter, encourage and approve so many pious practices as she does today. Literally there are thousands of "devotions" of every kind, and unfortunately in their wake there has followed an immense amount of trafficking in objects and exercises of piety. Swept along by the tide, common-sense Catholics find themselves overwhelmed by their devotional commitments. So many *things* to put on or carry with them; so many prayers to say; so many saints to invoke; so many

holy pictures and leaflets bulging their prayer-books; so many subscriptions to "leagues," and "lamps," and shrines; and as a result a slow but sure drifting farther and farther away from the moorings of simple Christianity!

A practical object-lesson in the extent and variety of present-day Catholic devotions, to say nothing of the trafficking therein, may be had by a visit to a Catholic "repository." [1] There one will see, set up for sale, the implements of Catholic devotional piety, multifarious in form, ingenious in conception, and adapted to every taste, and every purse. We see a veritable army of statuettes of the "Little Flower," marshalled row upon row, like a regiment of soldiers on parade. Close by in pigeon-holes, on an ample table, a vast assortment of medals of different saints, resembling a collection of coins. On stands, divided off, one from the other, flutter gaudy scapulars, large and small, red, black, blue, brown, green, and in combination of colours. There are picture galleries of "Sacred Hearts," "Blessed Virgins," "Michaels" and "Raphaels" (the Angels), "St. Josephs," "Popes," "Eyes of God," and a host of other sacred pictures. Crucifixes, Holy Water Fonts, beads, "Agnus Deis," and a thousand and one other objects of piety, make one feel as though one were in a spiritual armoury. But what would perhaps strike the visitor as most amusing is the rather unctuous pseudo-pious airs of the salesmen, who convey by their manner the suggestion that their one purpose in life is the *spiritual comfort of their customers!*

[1] In Barclay Street, New York City, there are several Catholic repositories.

"A Catholic devotion," states the Cathedral Bulletin,[1] "sanctioned by the Church is no mere outcome of sentimental piety. . . . It is something very real, something very solid. . . . A Catholic devotion is *always*, in its ultimate analysis the expression of a Catholic dogma . . . many a theological conclusion, which to the untrained intellect might appear obscure in its technical wording, makes itself a home among the humblest . . . when it expresses itself in one of those practical devotions which, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *take as if by storm the hearts of the people.*"

In this quotation the view-point of the Church in respect to devotions, is described. They are "real and solid"; "expressions of dogma"; "under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost"; and "taking by storm the hearts of the people." One such devotion is that to the "Little Flower," a recently canonised saint. It is perhaps the most popular and "sensational" of modern devotions and is most emphatically "duly authorised by the Church." But, in practice, how does it work out? What is it in the form in which it reaches the people, and "under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit takes their hearts by storm"?

Let us quote from a New York daily (of June 14, 1928).

"Father Dolan" (of whom the picture is given), "accompanied by his secretary Father Clement Sullivan, brought back with him *six rare relics* of Sainte Therèse (the "Little Flower") which will be placed in

[1] St. Patrick's, New York, June, 1928.

the shrine in Chicago. The relics are, *a fragment of her coffin,* and *of her habit,* both mounted and encased in glass; an object something like a monstrance in which the background is of silk embroidered rose-petals and the centre *the withered rose* which, according to the legend, the Saint gave to a Scotch girl; and three lockets, two containing *a fragment of her skin;* a third *a lock of her hair.*

"Father Dolan (who is the National Director of the 'Society of the Little Flower of Jesus'), said that the nuns at the little French shrine of Ste. Therèse at Lisieux, had sent the objects to America *to fortify the shrine* here. He was granted many privileges at Lisieux in recognition of his work here."

When the bits of skin, and coffin and habit, together with the lock of hair and the withered rose, are solemnly installed by Father Dolan in his shrine in Chicago, vast throngs will assemble to do honour to these relics, and quite possibly the assistance of the police will be needed to keep order—the which will be a great triumph for Father Dolan. During the novena in honour of the relics, his church will be packed every evening by Chicagoans, who will find relief from the sputtering of gangsters' bullets, in the story of the Scotch girl's rose, and in honouring the French girl-saint's lock of hair. In a short time a million dollars will flow into the hands of Father Dolan for the building of a larger shrine more worthy of the priceless relics—and let us hope some of it will go to the little French Sisters at Lisieux who "fortified the shrine" at Chicago. In all this, however, if we are to believe the Cathedral Bulletin quoted above, there is no "sentimental piety," but it is

"something very real, something very solid"—in fact "religion pure and undefiled."

Continuing, the Cathedral Bulletin seems apologetically to admit the existence of a certain appearance of "exoticism" in some devotions; but it covers up this faltering concession with a burst of rhetoric. "If it be a blossom" (that is, the devotion), "with brilliant hue and fragrant perfume, it is a *blossom of a noble tree* that rears its branches as high as heaven and has its roots as deep as the faith that is the life of the Church."

The propagators of devotion to the "Little Flower" are not of course in undisputed possession of Catholic publicity. There are from time to time interesting bids for the good-will of the faithful emanating from this or that Congregation. Indeed when Father Dolan arrived from Europe with his sacred ammunition he found that the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament had forestalled his great spiritual surprise, and had captured the attention of the Catholic public by a novel and really stupendous undertaking. They had launched a scheme for collecting the biggest bouquet of flowers (spiritual of course) that had ever been collected in the history of the world! It was to consist of 200,000,000 blossoms, presumably, "of brilliant hue and fragrant perfume," which were to be transported to Sydney (Australia) in time for the Eucharistic Congress. There had been spiritual bouquets collected before, some of them very large, of a thousand, ten thousand, and even, I believe, of a million blossoms. But the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament were going to beat

14,610

all previous records and collect one so great that it could never subsequently be outdone! And it was to consist of exclusively American "Hail-Marys," and "Acts of Contrition." There would be thousands of "Genuflections" from Boston; Florida would contribute hundreds of "God bless the Popes"; and there would be "Vows of Virginity" from Salt Lake City!

"These spiritual flowers," states *The Catholic News*,[1] "presented by the Catholics of America are to be woven into a *heavenly garland*, and lovingly placed before the God of the Eucharist during his triumph in Sydney in September next (1928). An elaborate white kid skin artistically adorned will cover this book amounting to over one hundred pages . . . not only will the cover be of costly material and beautifully illustrated but each of the parchments will portray the coats of arms of the respective dioceses in colours," etc.

The piety that instigated this very pretty scheme, was no doubt tender and beautiful, though one cannot be so sure that it was "very real, and very solid." Furthermore the "theology" behind the weaving of prayers, praises and pious acts (whose "virtue" is in suspension pending its oblation months later at the Eucharistic Congress) into a spiritual garland is needless to say incomprehensible. The transubstantiation of the "bouquet" into a "white kid skin book" makes the matter still more difficult to understand.

One turns with a certain feeling of relief from the trafficking of the "Little Flower" devotion, and the "notoriety" of pious enterprises like the Spiritual Bouquet, to the simplicity and disinterestedness of some

[1] June 2, 1928.

of the homely native devotions of the Catholic peasantry in the old countries. Among the latter we have pilgrimages to "Holy Wells." It is interesting to notice that some of these pilgrimages are looked upon with disfavour by the Church, especially those where no priest officiates, and no contributions are collected. There are dark hints of "superstition" from the clergy, but in spite of such hints the people cling to their pious customs. On arrival at the "Holy Well" the pilgrim goes on his knees and makes his way around the well three times, or seven times, or nine times according to the practice in vogue. On completing each circuit he throws a pebble into the well, and when leaving he attaches a scrap of linen or cloth to a neighbouring bush. Sometimes there are special rites. Thus, at a certain well in Kildare (Ireland), called "Father Moore's Well" —(Father Moore had been famous in the district for his power of healing)—the pilgrim puts on an old hat, said to have belonged to Father Moore, and goes round the well thus attired. Men and women alike don "Father Moore's hat" at the well, and after conforming to the ritual, they replace the hat, respectfully, on a stick beside the well.

There are Catholics who pretend that gruesome displays of relics belong to ages long past, and that at the present time the Church does not lay so much emphasis on the worship of relics, but this is not so. More perhaps than at any previous time the faithful are encouraged to cultivate this form of devotion, and thanks to the greater facilities now enjoyed in the visiting of shrines, the cult of relics is more widespread than ever.

It is quite common, even in this country, on the closing evening of a public mission or novena, to offer relics to the public to be kissed. The congregation approach in turn the communion-rail, and the priest hurries along the rail, pressing the relic to the lips of each one in turn, and hastily wiping it after each kiss with a piece of cloth.

One is reminded of the account given in the "Colloquies" of Erasmus, of his visit in company with Colet, to the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury: [1]

"On the Altar is the point of the sword with which the Archbishop's skull was cloven. We religiously kissed its sacred rust, on account of our love for the martyr. Entering the crypt the skull itself was displayed to us, incased in silver, though with a part at the top left bare to be kissed. . . . There also are hung up in the dark the hair-shirts, girdles, and bands with which that prelate used to subdue the flesh. The very appearance of them made us shudder, such a reproach were they to our luxurious softness. Thence we returned into the choir, on the north side of which are repositories for relics. When these were unlocked, from them were produced an amazing quantity of bones; skulls, jawbones, teeth, hands, fingers and arms, all of which we adoringly kissed, until my companion, a man less well disposed to this department of religion than I could have wished, not over politely refused to kiss an arm which had bleeding flesh still attached to it. . . ."

At the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, to which Erasmus went with Robert Aldridge, he was shown the knuckle of St. Peter, and "the milk of the Virgin still liquid." [2]

There are so many characteristics of "devotions" and

[1] "Eramus," by Preserved Smith, p. 72, (Harper, N. Y.).
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

"pieties" that it is impossible to touch upon more than a few of them. One such characteristic is the assignation of certain numbers and certain days to a devotion. As an example, in the Cathedral Bulletin, which of course is published with the authorisation of his Eminence Cardinal Hayes, we come across the following; "*Adopt the pious usage of many holy souls* of adoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus at nine in the morning and four in the evening."

These words of advice, apparently so simple, are pregnant with strange possibilities! From such casual remarks of pious writers widespread devotions arise. "Four" and "nine" become the numbers connected with the devotion. The nuns remember and tell the children. The children tell the parents. Some crazy women feel inspired to say that "special graces" are obtainable on the 4th, 9th, 14th, 19th, 24th, and 29th day of each month, but especially in April (the fourth month) and September (the ninth month). Then the devotion spreads, and there are prayers to be said four times, and others nine times, and others four times nine times, etc. Eventually His Eminence is consulted and gives a *verbal* approval for one of these arithmetical combinations. Then the fat is in the fire! Eventually some pious Cardinal brings the matter before His Holiness and obtains Papal approval, and a Papal indulgence!

Innumerable illustrations of this tendency to arithmeticise devotions, and to connect them with the calendar might be given. Thus for St. Joseph are reserved *Wednesday* and *March*. I quote from a leaflet, called "Association of the Perpetual Lamp in honour of the joys and sorrows of St. Joseph." It reads: "Mass is

offered for the *subscribers'* intentions; (1) on the first Wednesday of every month; (2) on every day during the month of March; (3) and a Novena of Masses preceding the feast of the Solemnity of St. Joseph, the third Wednesday after Easter." Thus Wednesdays, especially the third and the first Wednesday of a month, and the Month of March are duly emphasised. Other Saints have special days, and some have special months, and nearly all are worshipped in threes, or nines, or eights.

One other characteristic of devotions is the setting up of claims for their efficacy. Let us return to the leaflet about the "Joys and Sorrows" of St. Joseph. The efficacy of this devotion is *established* by means of the quotation which follows from the writings of St. Teresa:

"I cannot call to mind," wrote St. Teresa, "that I have ever asked St. Joseph for anything which he did not obtain for me; and I am filled with amazement when I consider the great favours God has granted me . . . through the prayers and merits of this blessed Saint.

"To other Saints Our Lord seems to have given power to succour men in some special necessity; but to this glorious Saint, *as I know by experience*, to help us in all necessities.

"Among all those who are sincerely devoted to him and who openly honour him I know not a single one that does not daily advance in virtue—so powerfully does he assist all those who place themselves under his protection."

Among Catholics, St. Teresa is classed with the

"Doctors of the Church" and the most level-headed of ascetics . . . and yet how colossal is the claim she sets up for this devotion!

Perhaps, after devotion to the Blessed Virgin, the most widely-spread Catholic devotion is that to "The Sacred Heart." "It is a devotion," states the Cathedral Bulletin,[1] "eminently calculated to bring home to the hearts of the faithful the abstruse conclusions of theology on the subject of the Hypostatic Union." Needless to say the average Catholic knows nothing about the theory of the Hypostatic Union—namely, the substantial union of Divine and Human nature in the one subsistence and one person of Christ. He understands Christ as being a Man-God, a true Man, with a true human heart. And in his devotion to "The Sacred Heart" he adores the *human heart of Christ.* This devotion has the two characteristics noted above, on the one hand, number and the calendar are emphasised; on the other, stupendous claims are set up for it.

In the leaflet of "The Association of the Perpetual Lamp in Reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus," we have the following; "Mass is offered for the *subscribers'* intentions; (1) on the *First Friday* of every month; (2) on every day during the month of *June;* (3) and a novena of masses preceding the feast of the Sacred Heart." June is of course the *month* of the Sacred Heart, and *Friday* is the week day of the Sacred Heart (the feast is a Friday of June), and *nine* is the special number connected with the devotions. The *first* Friday of a month is the most important in the devotion.

[1] P. 17.

Now the claims made on behalf of this devotion are the most stupendous of all. *They are based on "promises," twelve in number, made to Saint Margaret Mary in a colloquy and vision which she claimed to have enjoyed with the Sacred Heart.* These promises are published, and circulated throughout the entire Catholic world with the approval, the full and *apparently* unqualified approval, of the Church. They attract the people to this devotion. They are the stimulus that inspires the people to give money liberally to the shrines of the Sacred Heart. Let me add that the Jesuits were the prime movers in establishing this devotion.

In respect to the *promises* the Church of course leaves the faithful free to believe or to withhold belief, but directly and indirectly she *encourages* the faithful to believe in them, and she is responsible for the faith placed in them by millions of Catholics.

It is the "Twelfth Promise," of those supposedly made to Blessed Margaret Mary, that is calculated to excite the maximum of wonder and astonishment. In it there is an implicit promise of eternal salvation to all who make the "Nine First Fridays," that is, who communicate worthily on the First Fridays of nine successive months. A Catholic who having dutifully fulfilled the stipulated conditions, might well feel himself secure of an eternal crown, no matter what his conduct should be subsequent to his "making the Nine First Fridays." It may be of interest to quote in full this famous "Twelfth Promise." It reads;

"I, (namely the Sacred Heart), promise thee in the excess of the mercy of My Heart, that Its all-powerful Love will grant to all who receive Communion on the First Friday of

every month for nine consecutive months, the grace of final repentance, and that they shall not die under My displeasure, nor without receiving the sacraments, and My Heart shall be their secure refuge at that last hour."

Let us examine for a moment what this "Twelfth Promise" implies. It reads, "they shall not die . . . without receiving the sacraments" . . . that is, that each and every one of the hundred of millions who have made the "Nine First Fridays" are assured of having a priest at their death-beds to give them the last sacraments. Now since this promise was issued over two hundred years ago, millions who have made the "Nine First Fridays" have died—but we must suppose that not one of them died suddenly, or in battle, or in shipwreck or in an accident, or in a place where there was no priest! And since all priests make this novena many times we have to believe that since the seventeenth century no priest, good, bad, or indifferent, heretic, infidel, or agnostic, has died "in the displeasure of the Sacred Heart," or without the comfort of the last sacraments! Furthermore if we are to be consistent in our faith, we must regard as untrue and as subversive of this devotion to the Sacred Heart, the supposedly edifying stories of missionary priests slaughtered by savages or dying alone on foreign missions. For all such deaths would belie the "Twelfth Promise." Personally I have known many priests to die suddenly, and without the last sacraments—though they had made the "Nine First Fridays"—but it is hardly necessary to subject this supposedly divine promise to further analysis. Needless to say it runs counter to solid teachings of Catholicism.

Yet, we are faced with the astonishing fact that the Church, in the persons of her bishops throughout the world, approves of the faithful putting faith in the "Twelfth Promise"! Every bishop allows the "promises" to be printed and circulated in his diocese, and sanctions the publication thereof! This fact is sufficient proof, in the minds of the ordinary Catholics, that it is right and proper to accept the promises literally—and the faithful do accept them as sacred revelation.

As an example of a devotion to a saint, with its historical, or pseudo-historical background, let me take the case of Saint Anne (whose *feast* is fixed on 26 July). All that is known with certainty is that the Blessed Virgin *must* have had a mother—and the name Anne has been given to the unknown mother of Mary. Now let me quote from a Catholic paper, *The Standard*.[1]

"Devotion to Saint Anne is growing apace in our midst, and surely that devotion is well calculated to teach the dignity of true motherhood. . . . *The facts of their lives* (Anne and 'Joachim' her husband) *are hidden in the midst of the obscure past*. . . .

"The *legend* has it that the marriage of Joachim and Anne was long childless, and that they separated for a while from one another in holy retirement and that an angel visited them in turn and told them they would have a glorious posterity. . . . They were filled with joy in their old age at the birth of their child to whom they gave the name of Miriam . . . (21 B. C.!). . . . She (Anne) was granted signal favours and great blessings that fructified in the holiness of the life she led. . . . *The body of Saint Anne* was transferred to Constantinople in 710, and *her tomb was rediscovered in*

[1] Ireland, July 21, 1928.

1893. . . . Saints vied with each other in sounding her praises. *Churches were erected to enshrine her relics.* . . . Kings and peasants went on pilgrimages to her shrines, and miracle followed on miracle to bless those who loved her. . . ."

Such "devotions" of the Church are "growing apace in our midst," as *The Standard* correctly states. They are in part founded on the pious imaginings of mediæval monks. The "rediscovery" of the *tomb* of Saint Anne, so recently as 1893, shows that the credulity of the faithful never languishes—or, let us say, the fear among Catholics of applying critical reason to "devotions" is as strong as ever.[1] The Catholic attitude in regard to "devotions" seems in no way changed since the days of Erasmus.[2]

"There are those who worship certain heavenly powers with special rites. 'One salutes Christopher daily,' wrote the great humanist, 'though only when he sees his image, because he has persuaded himself that on such days he will be insured against an evil death. Another worships St. Roch, but why? Because he thinks to drive away the plague. Another mumbles prayers to Barbara or George, lest he fall into the hands of an enemy. This man vows to Apollonia to fast in order to escape toothache; that one gazes on the image of St. Job to get rid of the itch. Some give part of their profits to the poor in order to keep their busi-

[1] His Eminence, Cardinal Hayes (at St. Anne's Shrine, New York City, Jan. 15, 1929), *"Encouraged the faithful to have boundless confidence in the powerful intercession of St. Anne."* "The Sacred Relic of St. Anne is applied after each Mass and devotion and also every hour on the hour each day (during the Novena)." From *"The Catholic News,"* Jan. 19, 1929. St. Anne is facetiously called among Catholics *God's Grandmother.*

[2] Cf. "Erasmus," by Preserved Smith, p. 57. (Harper, New York.)

ness from mishap; some light candles to Jerome to restore a business already bad.' "

Such a cult of the Saints, he declares to be comparable to idolatry; the names of Hercules, Aesculapius and Neptune are changed but the spirit of the devotee is the same. "The true way to worship the Saints," continues Erasmus, "is to imitate their virtues, and they care more for this than for a hundred candles. . . . You venerate the bones of Paul laid away in a shrine, but not the mind of Paul enshrined in his writings." *Mutatis mutandis*, these words of Erasmus are verified in present Catholic practice. Anthony is worshipped that things lost may be restored; Benedict for the recovery of health; Joseph or Anne for a desirable mate; St. Roch to escape sore throat, and so on, but the imitation of the virtues of the Saints that are worshipped is more often than not forgotten.

One wonders whether in the matter of devotions it is the "pious faithful" who are leading the Church astray, or the Church which is leading the people astray. It seems evident that there is an abandoning of the path of simple Christianity. Devotions may appear to "pep up" religion, to inspire it with "movement," to awaken enthusiasm and enterprise, but in what direction is the going? Is it not towards the materialisation of religion? The deep human need that is felt for something spiritual is not satisfied by indulgence of emotional piety. The need is for a fuller insight into God, a closer union with the divinity through higher ethical conduct.

"In truth," writes Professor Guignebert,[1] "the glory

[1] "Christianity," p. 475.

of La Salette, or of Lourdes; the devotion to the Sacred Heart, to St. Joseph, St. Antony of Padua, and above all to St. Philomena, St. Expeditus, St. Christopher; all denote the victory of the religious materialism of the ignorant over the "spiritual" religion which enlightened Catholics demand. However they themselves may struggle against the undertow which is dragging them down they are sucked into it despite themselves. "Believing in Lourdes is not an article of faith," they say. That is true, but anyone who has followed the national pilgrimage in August, and seen the crowds of clerics of all ranks who hasten thither and the pomp of the official ceremonies which take place, would soon find himself unable to grasp the difference. What Catholic would dare nowadays to proclaim his unbelief with regard to the revelation made to Bernadette and the miracles that have followed it? This stooping of Ecclesiastical Authority to the most compromising exploitation of popular piety or credulity is disturbing and distressing to sensible Catholics. The "parasitical devotions" are often merely scandalous commercial undertakings, even swindles."

Pilgrimages, and exotic devotions are sometimes justified under the plea that *they tend to bring religion down to the level of the intelligence of ordinary folk*, and edify those who take their religion simply and who would never become attached to it if it were not brought down to their level. Meanwhile the plain man argues: "If I do what the priest tells me I cannot go far astray. I shall after all be doing all that is required of me." The priest tells him to join this or that pilgrimage to take part in this or that procession, to make this

or that novena. The plain man feels he has satisfied all justice when he obeys the behests of the priests. But is it a stone or bread that has been reached out to him? Do not pilgrimages and processions, and novenas, keep him still waiting in the ante-chamber of true religion? Are they not merely substitutes for the true "bread of life"?

The average Catholic comes to be more and more dependent on devotions. They constitute the "daily bread" of his soul. If he were, so to say, robbed of his devotions, he would feel his religion threadbare and unreal. Yet it should not be so. A Catholic should be able to satisfy fully his religious needs without ever saying a prayer to the Blessed Virgin, or the Saints—without ever glancing at or touching a pious emblem—without ever approaching a church, or shrine, save for his Sunday Mass. The "Lord's Prayer," the Mass, and thinking about God, is ample food for a healthy spiritual life. But he has developed the need of a colourful, beflagged religion, a religion of Saints and symbols, music, processions, miracles, and ecclesiastical pomp! Frankly, the ordinary Catholic has much to unlearn, but who will venture to clear away the misconceptions, superstitions, and pious prejudices that cloud his understanding? He has not the skill or courage to think for himself in these matters, and he can find no honest theologian to distinguish for him between what is shoddy and what is *true* in Catholicism. His devotions he has been told, are given him "to remind him about God." But he has found that gradually devotions lose their functions as symbols, and grow into "ends."

Silently but surely a transvaluation takes place in the mind of the Catholic, and the object, be it a candle or water, which was once prized for what it typified, and on account of being blessed, is now prized for its own sake.

"Lighted Candles," says Fander's Catechism,[1] "signify faith which enlightens, Hope which soars above this world, and Charity which inflames; and they also recall to our mind those times of persecution when the Christians celebrated the Divine Service in Catacombs or subterranean caverns." But in the minds of the average Catholic all this pretty symbol is forgotten or unknown, and the candle itself is grasped firmly as a something which has saving virtue. A dying Catholic clutches his Rosary Beads or his Crucifix as a drowning man might clutch a rope or a beam of wood.

Of Holy Water the same Catechism declares; "A pious Christian sprinkles himself with Holy Water not only when he enters or leaves the church, but also in his house when rising and going to bed, when going out and returning, and on many other occasions; and, at the same time, he begs of God that, through the blood of Jesus Christ, he may be more and more purified, and be protected in all dangers of soul and body." The last part, the prayer, is forgotten by the "pious Christian," and in practice Holy Water is used and cherished for its "inherent virtue."

It is curious to notice how Catholic apologists emphasise the fact that Catholicism "*is intensely and comprehensively human, while escaping the law of human*

[1] P. 327.

weakness." "By contrast now with most if not all other religions," writes Father D'Arcy, S.J.,[1] "we have this striking phenomenon in Catholicism that it gives scope for all the instincts and functions of human nature, that it is the home of religious experience and mysticism, that it appeals to the sight and the senses by its ritual and choirs and devotions, builds systems of philosophy which are a byword for cold hard reasoning, produces saints and mystics in every age and of the first order, while it lives as an institution which is the strictest social organism the world has ever known." It is not, however, by its philosophy that the Church holds the faithful in thrall, but largely because of its appeal "to the sight and the senses by its ritual and choirs and devotions." Who can pretend that this particular fact bears testimony to the superiority of Catholicism over other religions? Would not that religion be higher which held men in thrall not by any appeal it made to "the sight and the senses," but by the appeal it made to reason and the moral sense? Is not a religion open to suspicion *which takes advantage of human weakness by making appeal to the emotional side of man?* Father d'Arcy, however, claims that Catholicism "is intensely and, comprehensively human, while escaping the law of human weakness." This, no doubt, may be true of Catholicism "pure and undefiled" but not of *modern pietistic Catholicism.*

[1] "Catholicism," p. 11.

CHAPTER XV

GOD'S FORGOTTEN BIOGRAPHY

THE only *direct* knowledge to be had about God is from the story which He tells about Himself, and which is called the Bible. God vouches, according to Catholic doctrine, for the absolute truthfulness and inerrancy of His autobiography, and proclaims Himself the Author thereof. His story is of course the foundation of the Jewish and Christian religions; the "Constitution," as it were, of the Christian (and Jewish) State. Its importance is unique; its sacredness unparalleled; and the claim it makes on the attention of the Christian (and Jew) is peremptory. Yet, strange to say, the Catholic, who is *par excellence* the claimant of sonship of God, is in practice *indifferent to and ignorant of the Bible.*

Catholic unconcern about the Bible is one of the strangest anomalies of Catholicism. Catholics read "A Kempis," St. Augustine's "Confessions," the "Letters of Francis de Sales," but not the "Holy Book." They feel, and as it seems with reason, that the Church stands between them and the Bible and does not approve of their reading it. This is the big *true* "libel" against Catholicism. Its proof lies in the fact that the average Catholic, who hears the Bible ridiculed, is at a loss how to defend it. He is unable to say whether the "Talking

Serpent" or the "Prophesying Ass," or the "Man-swallowing Whale" are to be understood *literally* or not. While he is well acquainted with the life of Christ as recounted by the Evangelists, he is totally unacquainted with what God said to Moses, or with what Job said to God. He is in the curious position of one who *believes* in the Bible, but is in invincible ignorance as to what and how much he believes. Still more curious, *he is totally unconscious of the significance of his unconcern about the Bible*—of his implicit lack of interest in God and His Self-revelation. Needless to say he never asks himself, "By what authority does the Church interfere with my hearing what God Himself is broadcasting for all?"

None on earth are so emphatic in insisting on the fact that the Bible is "God's Word" as the Catholic Church. None are so uncompromising in teaching its holiness and inerrancy and beauty. *Yet, there is no Church among the Christian group which does so little to encourage its followers actually to read and study the Old Testament* as the Catholic Church. Nor has any other Church raised so many obstacles against the Bible being spread among the people as the Catholic Church. But of this more anon.

"The Bible in its entirety," writes a great Catholic authority,[1] "is the personal work of God. In it He records His marvellous revelations in history throughout the course of centuries, from the creation of the world to the establishment of the Christian Church . . .

[1] "The Study of the Bible"; (p. 14) by L. Cl. Fillion, S.S., Consultor of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Trans. by John C. Reville, S.J., Ph.D. (Kenedy, N. Y., 1926).

the Bible is inspired by God in its entirety and in its least details. . . . With all our strength let us stand up for the dogma of its inspiration together with all the conclusions and consequences that must necessarily follow."

The "dogma" referred to is the decree of the Vatican Council to the effect that the entire Bible with all its books and all its parts has God for its author. "It would be absolutely false," declared Leo XIII ("*Providentissimus Deus*," 1893), "either to limit inspiration to some parts of the Scriptures or to admit that the sacred writer himself erred. Neither can we tolerate the methods of those who do not hesitate to admit that divine inspiration extends only to those truths which concern faith and morals and to nothing else . . . all the books and those in their entirety, which the Church has accepted as sacred and canonical in all their parts were written under the dictation of the Holy Spirit. No error can be attached to divine inspiration, for of itself that excludes all error. . . . God the sovereign truth cannot be the author of error. . . . The doctors of the Church are unanimous in declaring that these books in whole and in part, are all alike divinely inspired, that God Himself has spoken by the sacred authors and that He cannot utter what is contrary to the truth."

A Catholic therefore must accept as of faith that *the Bible is written by God*, He being the "principal author," and the prophets and Moses being merely "instrumental" authors; and that it is true and holy in all its parts and in every one of its details; and that it is the sure foundation of his faith and his religion. It is a "holy book" through and through; the book of

eternal life. Nevertheless a Catholic will see no anomaly in the fact that the Bible "means nothing to him!" Nor is it an enigma for him that the Church *discourages the reading of the Bible!* Should he not suspect something amiss in the methodology of his religious training, when this fount and origin of all religion is placed as it were under spiritual lock and key? Needless to say *Catholic apologists angrily deny that the Bible is withheld from Catholics, or that they are discouraged from reading it.* But in their denials Catholic apologists lay themselves open to the charge of insincerity. What Catholic has heard a public sermon or exhortation devoted to encouraging the people old and young to read the *Bible*, I mean, the Old Testament? At most, one hears the reading of *the New Testament and the Psalms* advocated in sermons. I know many Catholics who are under the impression that it is sinful to read the Old Testament—and in general Catholic parents advise their children against reading it. No doubt in Catholic homes there is usually a family Bible but is it ever opened? It is regarded as a dread, strange book, and Catholics subconsciously fear it. As a *substitute* there are published for children pious booklets with bright holy pictures, recounting some edifying stories of the Old Testament. These books supply *to children and adults alike* the knowledge that is had among Catholics of the Bible.

It is not uninteresting to remark how much quibbling there exists among Catholic writers on this matter. Thus Fr. Fillion [1] deals with the question by quoting Pius X's praise of the "Society of St. Jerome"

[1] "The Study of the Bible," p. 101.

which spreads Scriptural knowledge among the poor of Italy. *But he does not point out that it is only the New Testament and the Psalms* (not *the whole Bible*) that the "Society of St. Jerome" gives to the people. Pope Pius wrote: "The work undertaken by the 'Society of St. Jerome' is offering to the mass of the people *an opportunity of reading the gospel* and becoming penetrated with its spirit. Satisfy, by a still greater number of copies among the people, that yearning for reading the gospel which your zeal has aroused. *It will also contribute to do away with the mistaken belief according to which it is only reluctantly that the Church allows the people to read the Scriptures.*" Commenting on this passage from Pius X Fr. Fillion continues; "This counsel of Pius X is *applicable also to the old Testament.*[1] It is clearly false, then, for Protestants to say that the Catholic Church absolutely forbids its members to read the Bible. . . . With Fénelon, I say, 'we must work unceasingly to prepare the faithful for this reading.' *But this does not mean that we may put the Scriptures into the hands of all indiscriminately. Do not advise or permit this reading without a proper understanding of the minds and hearts of the readers. It is not without danger for certain weak souls.*" [2] Here we have—after much circumlocution and quibbling—the real Catholic attitude and doctrine. Bible reading is only to be allowed to souls *known to be strong*—only to those "*whose minds and hearts are properly understood.*" The "Society of St. Jerome" with its work of distributing the "harmless"

[1] But *Pius X* made no such application! One wonders why.
[2] "The Study of the Bible," p. 102.

portion of God's word is mere camouflage! In fact there is little change from the attitude of the Church in the early thirteenth century when a Cardinal Legate of Rome ruled that; "Laymen should not possess the Old Testament and the New Testament; they shall only have the psalter, the breviary, and the book of Feasts of the Blessed Virgin; furthermore those books, (The Old and New Testaments) shall not be translated into the language of the country."

In view of the fact that many Popes, Innocent III, Pius IV, Clement VIII, and others, at various times and for various reasons, restricted the reading of the Bible to certain classes, and forbade it to others, there naturally has arisen much confusion in the Catholic mind as to the legitimacy of reading God's book. What Fr. Fillion says is of course true, that "The Church gladly places the sacred books in the hands of those of her children who in her judgment can profit from them." [1] But is not this a tacit confession of the fact that she *disapproves* of the reading of the Bible by others of her children?

The confusion of mind, to which I have referred, becomes obvious when we compare, for instance, the following quotations from Lacordaire:

(1)"Depository and Guardian of the word of God, *the Church has never been afraid to expose the real and genuine text of the Bible to the study and the gaze of all.*" [2]

(2) *"The Sacred Books could not be left in the hands of an untutored multitude*—whose docility and sturdy faith could not protect them from the pitfalls of ignorance." [3]

[1] "The Study of the Bible," p. 101.
[2] "Lettres á un jeune homme," p. 138.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

Again, on the one hand, we have Leo XIII proclaiming that the Church "has always caused the life-giving stream of divine scripture to flow towards her children," [1] and on the other hand, we have Gregory VII excluding the reading in the vernacular of the Scriptures in public assemblies. In 1234, the Synod of Tarragona declared that *ipso facto* any one was a heretic who having in his possession a copy of the Scriptures in the vernacular refused to surrender it to be burned within eighty days. No doubt, some plausible excuse, such as the presence of errors in the translation, was offered, but is it not strange that in so many Catholic countries, and at so many different periods, some excuse or other was found for keeping the faithful from freely enjoying the use of the Bible?

In discussing the question at issue His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons offers an amazing "proof" of the non-hostility of the Catholic Church to the general use of the Bible. "For fifteen centuries the Church was the sole guardian and depository of the Bible, and *if she really feared that sacred book who was to prevent her during that long period from tearing it in shreds* and scattering it to the winds? She could have thrown it into the sea as the unnatural mother would have thrown away her offspring, and who would have been the wiser? [2]

Cardinal Gibbons goes on to attribute to the Church a desire to make the Bible known to the people, adducing as evidence the fact that Pope Damasus had it translated into *Latin* . . . "if the Popes were afraid that the Bible should see the light this was a singular

1 This means through the medium of sermons, spiritual books, etc.
2 "Faith of Our Fathers," p. 90.

way of manifesting their fear." [1] But what percentage of the people could read in those days? Nay what percentage of the priests could read or understand Latin? And, more important still, having the book translated into Latin merely meant the addition of a *few* Latin MSS. The phrase "disseminating throughout Christendom" as applied to MSS. of the fourth or sixth century is surely an hyperbole.

The Bible has been called "the Priest's book" but as far as my experience goes the Priest has only a little more knowledge of it than the layman. He knows a little about the "Canon" of Sacred Scripture and a little about "inspiration," but unless he be a Biblical specialist, he is as incapable of answering plain questions about the Bible as the layman. Cardinal Gibbons must have had his tongue in his cheek when he wrote,[2] "After his ordination every priest *is obliged in conscience to devote upwards of an hour each day to the perusal of the word of God.* I am not aware that clergymen of other denominations are bound by the same duty." The Venerable Cardinal should be ashamed of such an effort to hoodwink his readers. There is no such obligation on priests as a daily "perusal" of the Word of God for "upwards of an hour." There is an obligation to read the "Office," which consists of pious Latin homilies called "lectiones" and a number of psalms. Priests *for the most part,* in reading the "Office," hurry as fast as they can over the psalms, and often finish their "perusal" in thirty minutes. Few Priests ever pause in their reading to try to understand what the psalms mean!

[1] "Faith of Our Fathers," p. 91.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 94.

We come now to the question, why is the Church so fearful lest the people in general should freely read the Bible? Is it lest they should acquire some "heretical views" from reading it? Lest they should come to doubt about heaven or hell or purgatory or the inspiration of the Bible itself? Or is it lest the realistic scenes of the Bible story should upset their morals? Stories such as those of Isaac and Rebecca, or Abram and Sarai, or the Rape of Dinah? "*Try to ignore,*" writes Lacordaire, "*the inevitable shadows which here and there hover over these pages, where the mysteries of time and eternity intermingle . . . an act incompatible with the morals and manners of the present day will be but the evidence of a remote antiquity in which history loses itself.*" Are the "inevitable shadows" hovering *here and there* such, that the morals of the young would be endangered if these passages were perused by them? Is it on account of this fear of evil results to morals from the reading of the Bible that the Church disapproves of its free use?

If this be the true reason, it is not the *avowed* one. The avowed reason is the fear of damage to the faith through misunderstanding texts and hence the Church is particularly hostile to the policy and activities of "Bible Societies" which publish the text of the Bible without Catholic explanatory notes.

No activity of non-Catholic organisations has embarrassed the Catholic Church to such an extent as the activity of Bible Societies. In the first place, the work that they set out to do, namely the spreading of the "word of God," by means of the distribution of the "Holy Book," is in itself admirable—all the more so

because they undertook the work on a gigantic scale. Between the British and American Bible Societies nearly 300,000,000 Bibles have now been distributed. But this good work was undertaken without the sanction of the Church—and without her supervision!

It must be noted that the "Protestant Bible" is even more conservative than the Catholic; it does not accept as Canonical as many books as the Catholic Bible. Whatever differences of text exist here and there between the Catholic and Protestant Bible, they are such as no ordinary Catholic would trouble about. A Catholic might indeed notice differences of wording at places in the New Testament, but he would not notice any differences of wording in the Old Testament—that is, he would not know whether it was a Catholic or a Protestant Bible he was reading. Further it is exceedingly doubtful if any Catholic would be in the least disturbed in his faith on account of reading a translation, from the Greek or the Hebrew, which was unsatisfactory to the Catholic Biblical scholars. Why, then, does the Church regard with such avowed reprobation the work of the Bible Societies? Why do Catholics share in this hostility without knowing what dispute is at issue?

In 1824, in his Encyclical, '*Ubi Primum*," *Pope* Leo XII, wrote thus: "You are aware, Venerable Brothers, that a certain Bible Society is impudently spreading throughout the world, which despising the tradition of the holy Fathers and the decrees of the Council of Trent, is endeavouring to translate or rather to pervert the Scriptures into the vernaculars of all

nations. . . . It is to be feared that by false interpretation the Gospel of Christ will become the Gospel of men, or still worse the Gospel of the devil." Continuing, the Pope[1] urges the Bishops "*to admonish their flocks that owing to human temerity more harm than good may come from indiscriminate Bible reading.*"

But, once again, what is the nature of the *harm* which the Pope fears from "indiscriminate Bible reading"? Is it harm to morals or to the faith? If the former, surely the blame is not to be laid upon the zealous Protestant Christians who circulate the Bible, but on the Bible itself? Even if the Protestant translation be in part incorrect, or deficient, does it for that reason make of the Bible a "gospel of the devil"?

In 1846, Pius IX, in the Encyclical "*Qui Pluribus,*" continues the attack on Bible Societies: "These crafty Bible Societies which renew the ancient guile of heretics cease not to thrust their Bibles upon all men, even the unlearned; their Bibles which have been translated against the laws of the Church, and often contain false explanations of the text. Thus, the divine traditions, the teachings of the Fathers, and the authority of the Catholic Church are rejected, and every one in his own way interprets the words of the Lord and distorts their meaning, thereby falling into miserable errors."

There is no doubt that it would have been in every way in better taste had the Bible Societies, when distributing Bibles *in Catholic countries,* distributed such Bibles as were approved by the Church and duly authorised. Had they done so they would have been less

1 "Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. II, p. 545.

open to the charge of proselytism. But even had they done so, the Church would have opposed their work! One of the reasons why the Church objects to Bible Societies is that their work seems to presuppose the sufficiency of private interpretation, and the adequacy of the Bible "without note or comment." The Church holds that the Scriptures of themselves are insufficient to convey to the average reader a sure knowledge of faith and morals! Hence in Catholic Bibles notes explanatory of the text are printed!

Recent Biblical Criticism has stirred Rome to take steps to safeguard and defend the integrity of Catholic faith in Biblical matters. Hence in 1902, by his Bull, "*Vigilantiæ*," Leo XIII set up what is known as the "Biblical Commission" at Rome. Its purpose, besides protecting and defending the faith, is to "further the progress of the exposition of the Sacred Books"; to decide controversies between Catholic scholars; and to give answers to Catholic inquirers. The Commission is constituted like a Roman Congregation. *All the power* is in the hands of a few Cardinals who themselves need know nothing of "Biblical Science." The Cardinals propose the questions which are to be studied by the "Consultores," the Catholic Biblical Experts. The replies of the "Consultores" are voted upon by the Cardinals *alone*. The latter are free to reject or modify the opinions of the specialists. The final vote of the Cardinals is submitted to the Pope for ratification or rejection. Even in the case of the Pope's ratification, the decision still remains short of an infallible one. The Commission therefore is thoroughly conservative

in spirit and constitution, and *in the last analysis it is the policy of the Cardinals rather than the scholarship of the "Consultores"* that decides what is to be held or what is to be rejected, in matters concerning the "Word of God."

That policy plays a rôle in the interpretation of the texts of Scripture at the hands of Roman Cardinals, is capable of illustration by reference to the Galileo case. Galileo had urged that Scripture is intended to "teach men to go to heaven, and not how the heavens go"—but he went further and maintained that Copernicanism "contradicted, or appeared to contradict Scripture." In the course of the controversy an interesting letter was written by the Jesuit Cardinal Bellarmine, the most influential member of the Sacred College.

"I say that if a real proof be found that the sun is fixed and does not revolve round the earth, but the earth round the sun, then *it will be necessary, very carefully, to proceed to the explanation of the passages of Scripture which appear to be contrary,* and we should rather say that we have misunderstood these than pronounce that to be false which is demonstrated." Thus the learned Cardinal found a way out of the impasse: hitherto Scriptures had been interpreted in one way, now it became inconvenient to continue to interpret them in that way, and it became politic "very carefully to proceed (anew) to the explanation of the passages," and so find another equally edifying but truer explanation or interpretation. The "volte face" of the learned Jesuit might, however, have been made more frankly, more graciously, and somewhat earlier in point of time.

There is perhaps nothing more puzzling to the sci-

entific mind than the Catholic doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible. Thus Julian Huxley,[1] roundly affirms that there is "no different kind of inspiration in the Bible from that in Shelley's poetry. That is to say there is no literal revelation, no literal inspiration; and it is mere prevarication to shift as is often done, from one sense of these words to the other, from the wholly literal . . . to the descriptive-metaphorical."

This is of course diametrically opposed to the view of the Catholic Church which holds that the Bible is inspired from its first to its last line. As to what inspiration precisely is, theologians are in doubt though they attempt to explain it. Thus, Fr. Fillion [2] writes.

"The impulse which urged the Sacred writers to take up the pen, the interior illumination which showed them more or less completely the materials on which they were to work, the constant direction and supervision exercised over their work all came from God. Inspiration then on the part of God supposes in the first place a movement exercised on the will of the writer chosen by Him, in order to urge this human instrument to begin the work; in the second place light given to his intellect either to impart new knowledge or to aid him to form a supernatural judgment on ideas and facts already known to him; in the third place uninterrupted assistance to preserve the writer from all error." Such is the Catholic view of "Inspiration." It agrees with the teaching of St. Thomas: "*Auctor principalis Scripturæ est Spiritus Sanctus . . . Homo fuit auctor instrumentalis*" ("The author in

[1] "Religion Without Revelation," p. 43. (Harper, N. Y.)
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

chief of the Scripture is the Holy Spirit; man was the instrumental author"). "Scripture," said St. Bonaventure is the "voice, the mouth, the tongue of God."

What is peculiar to the mind of the average Catholic in regard to inspiration, is that he is in chronic and apparently "invincible" doubt as to how far Bible stories must be taken literally; and how far he is free to interpret them metaphorically. Personally though I have lived for years with priests, many of whom were excellent theologians and learned men, I doubt if I ever met a priest who could tell me categorically what precisely the Church held about such an incident as that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. When one inquires one receives the reply that the story is *true and divinely revealed.* But when one asks must one accept "literally" *every detail* in the story, one is met with an uncertain, "I don't know."

Let us listen for a moment to Fr. D'Arcy: [1] "According to the Catholic faith the Bible story of Adam and Eve relates the fact that mankind fell from grace. . . . Now it is to be observed *that Catholicism has never declared that all the details in the setting of the story in Genesis are historical.* . . ." Needless to say such an "explanation" of what is "according to the Catholic" faith leaves the average Catholic in a quandary. He finds nothing about a "fall from grace" in the text—and what he anxiously desires to know, namely *if a serpent really spoke, if the "apple" was an ordinary "apple," if God hid in the Garden,* as an ordinary man would hide behind trees—he is left without knowing. What of *these details?* Are they *historical?*

[1] "Catholicism", by Rev. M. C. D'Arcy, S.J., p. 71.

And if not what are the historical facts of the case? The Vatican Council taught that "God cannot be the author of error . . . cannot utter what is contrary to truth. . . ." If so, are we to hold that the details referred to above are historically true? Again we read in the Catholic Encyclopedia:[1] "The inerrancy of the Bible follows as a consequence of this divine Authorship. Wherever the sacred writer makes a statement as his own, that statement is the word of God and infallibly true whatever be the subject matter of the statement." To quote once more from the Encyclical of Leo XIII, "*Providentissimus Deus*";

> "It will never be lawful to restrict inspiration merely to certain parts of the Holy Scripture or to grant that the sacred writer could have made a mistake. Nor may the opinion of those be tolerated who, in order to get out of these difficulties, do not hesitate to suppose that Divine Inspiration extends only to what touches faith and morals, on the false plea that the true meaning is sought for less in what God has said than in the motive for which he has said it."

It is hard therefore for an average Catholic to understand what Fr. D'Arcy means when he writes that: "Catholicism has never declared that all the details in the setting of the story of Genesis are historical." The Church *seems* to teach what is indistinguishable from "verbal inspiration" and insists on the inerrancy of every word of Genesis, and presumedly on every detail in the story of Adam and Eve?

Catholics in general therefore are left in doubt and ignorance about the meaning of their Bible, as they are left in doubt and ignorance about the political

[1] Vol. II, p. 543.

philosophy of Catholicism. They are treated as "little children" who cannot always be trusted to know the truth.

The attitude of Catholics in respect of the Bible was dramatically illustrated by an announcement published in the *New York Times*,[1] and paid for by "a native Pittsburg Catholic business man who believes in his religion." The announcement read: "CATHOLICS LOVE THE BIBLE. . . . The Catholic Church cherishes the Bible. ALL OF IT. She believes the Bible to be the Word of God . . . not a mere human document. She believes the Bible contains no errors. Catholics reverence the Bible so much that they rise and stand when it is read, and kiss it devoutly after reading it." It is of course true that Catholics have a mental pigeon-hole which contains these thoughts about the Bible, but if the "love and reverence" were practical, would they not read and study the Bible more than they do? If letters come from one we love, even though they be somewhat illegible, and in places obscure, do we leave them unread? In particular, if they contain the *only available direct information* about the loved one?

It is in the actual dealings of a Catholic with his Bible that we must judge of his *love and reverence* for it—not in what religious concepts he cherishes under the compulsion of faith. The Catholic business man of Pittsburg refers to "kissing" the Bible but the word of God is not sucked up by a kiss but by careful reading and study. The excuse that the Bible is too difficult to understand is often given by Catholics who realise that they should read it, but who do not do so. In parts

[1] Oct. 22, 1925.

it is no doubt difficult and dry but there are other parts which make easy reading. And did not St. Gregory say; "it is a deep and placid stream across which a lamb may wade or an elephant swim and gambol?" Those, therefore, who cannot boast of the strength of elephants, can none the less ford the stream, in the wake of the lambs.

CHAPTER XVI

"THE THREE WISE MEN"

THE story which St. Matthew the Evangelist relates of "Wise Men" (Magi) from the East who followed a star that led them to the Infant Christ, was the subject of a sermon delivered by His Eminence, Cardinal Hayes, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, on December 30, 1928. An attack on revealed religion had been made by one of the members of "The American Association for the Advancement of Science" a few days previously, and His Eminence thought it opportune to define anew the attitude of the Catholic Church towards science. Taking the Magi as "representatives of science" he showed how "their science led them to an act of supreme faith which in turn brought them to the feet of Christ." "Science," he added, "in the person of the Magi was present in Bethlehem and offered as a tribute of science for all ages, the gold of its own wisdom, the frankincense of its power, and the myrrh of its own limitation."

It was a daring gesture on the part of His Eminence to point to the conduct of the Magi as a moral lesson for the scientists of America, some of whom were present by special invitation at his sermon. Who the Magi were, from whence they came, what were their names, or what precisely they did, were questions that not even His Eminence could have answered. The gospel

story is regarded by scientific historians as pure myth. Even Christian tradition abounds in contradictions in its regard. It is unknown how many "Wise Men" there were; some authorities say two, some three, some four, some eight, and some twelve. It is *supposed* that they were Persian Zoroastrians; interpreters of dreams, and readers of the stars; but whatever their avocation it was one grounded in pagan superstition. Be that as it may, they beheld, as the story goes, a moving star, and they bravely followed it, until it stood still over the house where dwelt the Christ. They adored and offered gifts, and then returned home. The subsequent development of the Magi story is worth recording. Tradition states that they were converted to Christianity by St. Thomas, and that they died and were buried in Persia. *Their remains were centuries later miraculously discovered by St. Helena* and transported by her to Constantinople. From Constantinople the remains were carried to Milan, and in 1163 we find "The Three Wise Men" (by now the number has become fixed) in a crypt in Cologne Cathedral and the object of the worship of the faithful.

When His Eminence went on to say that "the Church reveres true science . . . and accepts gladly her unassailable findings" some of the scientists present must have wondered whether the Church included history in science, and whether, after all, the Church's exploitation of the Magi was not a poor illustration of how "faith frees and preserves reason from error and enriches it with knowledge" (Vatican Council).

Cardinal Hayes was not alone in defending religion

from the attack that Professor Harry Elmer Barnes had made upon it. The learned President of the "American Association for the Advancement of Science," forgetting Thomas Huxley's aphorism [1] made the extraordinary announcement that "there is absolutely no antagonism between science and religion. . . . There is none, and there can be none." [2] To prove this statement Professor Osborn went on to say that "some of the greatest men of science have been religious men," as though such a "proof" were worth a grain of salt. Did the piety of Galileo negative the fact that the Church was antagonistic to his science? Was the ecclesiastical rank of Nicholas Copernicus, to which Cardinal Hayes alluded as "evidence of the Church's (protective) attitude towards science," a proof that religion was not antagonistic to Copernicanism? Finally, would Professor Osborn agree with his ecclesiastical coexponent of the harmony between science and religion that "there is nothing more scientific in a basic sense than the acceptance of true Christian faith?"

The difficulty of discussing fairly and justly the relationship which exists between science and religion lies in the fact that there is no general agreement as to what the word "religion" stands for and as to what the word "science" stands for. In order to be fair and just (though at the risk of limiting the field of discussion) I propose here to equate "religion" with Roman Catholicism and to take as my definition of science that which was agreed upon by the "forty distinguished scientists"

[1] "Every pathway of modern science is closed with the sign . . . 'No thoroughfare' . . . Moses."
[2] *The World,* N. Y., February 3, 1929.

who met at Washington in May 1923 to discuss this very question of the relationship of science and religion. The Washington Conference took as their definition of science "*the developing without prejudice or preconception of any kind a knowledge of the facts, the laws, and the processes of nature.*" This definition seems to the writer to convey very well the modern understanding of the word "science," all the more so if the word "nature" be understood to include "human nature," and "facts" be understood to include historical occurrences.

The question then which we propose to discuss is whether Roman Catholicism as a religion harmonises with science thus understood. And whether there be justification for what Cardinal Hayes described as "the fashion of the day in seeing conflict and contradiction between religion and science." To put the matter another way, and still in the words of Cardinal Hayes: "Is there any *substantial reason* to believe that the mentality and mind of the Magi at Bethlehem would impair or retard in any way the progress of modern science?" [1] Frankly we believe that the "mentality and mind" of the Magi *would* impair the progress of modern science, inasmuch as it was obviously under the influence of "prejudices and preconceptions." We believe that the "mentality and mind" of the Magi should be interpreted in terms of the reactions towards modern science of the devout Christian.

As an illustration of such reactions, it may be of interest to quote a passage from a lecture "Why the

[1] The text of Cardinal Hayes' important sermon is to be found in *The Catholic News*, January 5, 1929.

Church is hated" delivered by the first Governor-General of the Irish Free State, a distinguished and learned Catholic, Mr. Timothy Healy.[1]

"These so-called scientists and philosophers are mere bubble blowers. There is no greater humbug than the so-called scientist of modern times. . . . This monkey business was started because it struck deliberately at the existence of the human soul. And it is because these men know that these so-called philosophies are part of the devil's apparatus that they are so continuously and assiduously propagating them, and for that reason the Church is continually denying them and incurring thereby the hatred of these philosophical nincompoops. The only thing I can see this free-thought gives is the right to loose living and loose thinking. They may box the compass of unbelief in any way they please, they may decorate it with the pretences of human liberty, but in the end it comes down to nothing else than the licence to defraud one's neighbour or one's neighbour's wife."

One can easily guess what are the spontaneous reactions of "the reliable Catholics" of the Church toward scientists who actively and "without prejudice or preconception" pursue investigations into the phallicism of Christian symbols, the neo-Platonism of the fourth gospel, or the practical application of eugenics.

The root of the antagonism between Catholicism and modern science seems to lie in the fact that the Church *claims a privileged position* vis-à-vis of science. She speaks down to science; she attempts to chaperon science; she sits in judgment on the findings of science thus constituting herself the ultimate tribunal of truth. Julian Huxley writes irritably of "the insufferable ar-

[1] "The Life of Tim Healy," by Liam O'Flaherty, p. 34 (1927).

rogance of those who claim to be in sole possession of truth" and his irritation betrays the inevitable reaction of the young scientist who comes face to face with the claims of Catholicism. We have just seen how Mr. Healy felt towards the "nincompoops" who dared to assail "the existence of the human soul." We can imagine how the Huxleys feel when they read that "Faith [Catholic faith] preserves reason from error and enriches it with knowledge." "The lesson of history is clear as to the chief abuses into which religion can fall," writes Julian Huxley.[1] "Playing on superstitious fears; dogmatism and intellectual narrowness; aspiring to a false certitude; intolerance and persecution; ecclesiasticism; exaggerated asceticism; . . . these are a few. They can perhaps be avoided by recognising that religious truth is no more absolute or fixed than any other truth; by rejecting providentialism and all those other branches of other-worldliness which hate this world and despise it; by regarding fear as one of the curses of mankind; by recognising religion as but one of man's desirable activities."

The Church does not in the least conceal the fact that she claims a privileged position vis-à-vis of science. In the Vatican Council (Session III, De Fide IV) we find the Church asserting her right to preserve science from "falling into errors contrary to divine doctrine and from overstepping its own boundaries and throwing into confusion matters that belong to the domain of faith." The Church's claim is put succinctly by the Catholic Encyclopedia: "when a clearly defined dogma

[1] "Religion Without Revelation," p. 372. (1928).

contradicts a scientific assertion *the latter has to be revised* and it will be found to be premature." [1]

The reason why the Church feels so sure of her position is that she trusts absolutely to the inerrancy of "revelation." While science recognises only one kind of knowledge, namely such as can be gained by the exercise of the senses and the mind, the Church recognises two kinds of knowledge, the divine (revealed) and the human. Of these two she places divine knowledge on a privileged plane. *It* is certain, unequivocal, exact. It rests upon the authority of God, who "can neither deceive nor be deceived." Scientists may err and come to false conclusions, but not so God. Hence "a well-instructed Catholic child [who has been taught the facts of revelation] knows more of the important truths than did Kant, Herbert Spencer or Huxley." [2]

Theology, building upon the foundations of revelation, erects vast structures of knowledge at which science naturally looks askance. Science regards such structures as "rationalisations" to the great annoyance of theologians. The latter complain bitterly that theology which they call the "Queen of Sciences" should be boycotted in her own court. To the cry that "theology should adjust itself to science" they reply that "science should adjust itself to theology." "How much theology has science assimilated?" asked Father McNabb, a distinguished theologian, in a recent book.[3] In answering his own question he recalls with contempt the "gross ignorance of theology manifested by some of the most accredited of scientists." Then he proceeds to con-

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. XIII, p. 607.
[2] Catholic Encyclopedia, p. 606.
[3] *The Catholic Church and Philosophy*, p. 12.

sole himself by means of the reflection that "it is the higher which assimilates the lower and not *vice versa*." And since theology is higher than science it falls to its lot, as being possessed of superior assimilative powers, to absorb science! Professor Windle, an eminent Catholic writer, makes a similar complaint against the non-assimilation of Catholic philosophy by science. He finds that scientists on account of this neglect fall into gross errors. "I am sure I am not exaggerating when I say," he writes,[1] "that there are philosophical errors in at least *fifty per cent* of scientific manuals which might and would have been avoided if their authors had ever taken the trouble to get a real grip of logic, not to speak of other branches of [Catholic] philosophy."

We find then a very real antagonism between science and Catholicism, founded in the fact that Catholicism places supernatural knowledge above human knowledge while science refuses to admit the trustworthiness of supernatural knowledge. This antagonism is sharpened by the additional fact that science rejects both Catholic theology and Catholic philosophy as fundamentally vitiated by "prejudices and preconceptions." So little regard indeed have modern scientists for theology that we find Julian Huxley saying:[2] "If the whole great edifice of mediævalist theology were to crumble away to nothing the religious feeling native to humanity would speedily enough build up something which could be put in its place."

There are certain great problems which put to the

[1] *International University Magazine*, vol. I, no. 1.
[2] "Religion Without Revelation," p. 354.

test the respective attitudes of Scientists and Theologians. One is the problem of the demonstrability of God's existence; another is the problem of the demonstrability of miracles.

In respect to the first the Church teaches that the existence of God can be proved from reason alone, without any recourse to Scripture or revelation or miracles. "If any one shall say that the One True God, Our Creator and Lord, cannot be certainly known by the natural light of human reason through created things . . . *anathema sit.*" [1]

This dogma, which is infallible, and must be believed by all Catholics, implies that there are proofs, based on natural phenomena, which lead the human mind to a certain recognition of the existence of God. It implies that the average man, who uses his reason aright, can discover these proofs and attain to certitude about the existence of the One True God. The Church, it is important to note, in arriving at this doctrine, availed herself of her two sources of knowledge, divine and human. In other words, it was not through human reason alone, that the Church arrived at the decision, that by the light of the human reason alone, the existence of God can be proved!

Now there is no doubt that many eminent scientists have satisfied themselves through the use of their reason as to the existence of God, but it is doubtful if many of them would admit either that their proofs were absolutely conclusive, or that the average man could by the light of *his* reason climb the same intellectual

[1] Vatican Council.

ladder that they climbed, in reaching certainty about God. Furthermore the majority of modern scientists, of whom let us take Bertrand Russell as the spokesman, utterly reject the Vatican Dogma. "God and immortality," writes Bertrand Russell,[1] "the central dogmas of the Christian religion, find no support in science. . . . I cannot see any ground for either. I do not pretend to be able to prove that there is no God. I equally cannot prove that Satan is a fiction. The Christian God may exist; so may the Gods of Olympus or of ancient Egypt or of Babylon. But no one of these hypotheses is more probable than any other; *they lie outside the region of even probable knowledge*, and therefore there is no reason to consider any of them."

The position is curious. The Church, which is so much accused of relying on faith rather than on reason, throws down the gauntlet to the advocates of reason. But, then, the query naturally arises: "If there be convincing proof of the existence of God from the phenomena of nature, why is it not put forward in so clear a manner as to satisfy, once for all, all men?" Even brilliant exponents of Catholic philosophy, such for instance as Fr. Ronald Knox, fail to present a really convincing argument. "The lines of our experience even in the natural world outside us," he writes, "converge towards one point, presuppose a Creator who has a necessary existence, a Prime Mover, a First Cause. But the created universe *points to* the existence not merely of an uncreated Power, but of an uncreated Mind." [2] Again: "The very nerve of our contention

[1] "What I Believe," p. 5.
[2] "The Belief of Catholics" (1928), pp. 60-70.

is that the material world which meets us in our experience does not provide the explanation of its own existence, or of the forces which control it, or of the laws which govern it; that the explanation consequently must be looked for in something that is outside and beyond itself. Our thought can only be satisfied by the existence of some necessary being, to which all this contingent existence around us, the world of creation, is secondary, and upon which it depends."

Yes, if one has already the notion of God, as a "necessary being," and of the world as a "contingent thing," and if one has the concept of an "uncreated Mind," and if one can be sure that the world which we see "does not provide the explanation of its own existence," and is controlled by forces "outside and beyond itself". . . then Fr. Knox's argument has weight. But only erudite Christians hold all these notions and beliefs, and for them alone the argument is worth while.

The controversy between Theologians and Scientists over the problem of miracles is second only in importance to that over the demonstrability of God's existence. The Church has declared: "If any one shall say that miracles are impossible . . . or that miracles can never be known with certainty, and that the divine origin of Christianity is not rightly proved by them . . . *anathema sit*." [1] Scientists, on the other hand, though they admit that they cannot prove the impossibility of miracles, see no ground for admitting their possibility, and reject as unsatisfactory the proffered "proofs" of any particular miracle. Scientists

[1] Vatican Council.

have to work on the assumption that *all* the phenomena of nature are explicable in terms of natural law. When phenomena appear that they cannot explain they admit that they are ignorant of the law back of the phenomena, but they do not admit that there is ground for postulating divine interference. The scientific spirit is naturally wholly antagonistic to the Catholic spirit of accepting miracles (multitudes of them!) on the flimsiest evidence. In Catholic "martyrologies," even in the "Holy Office" that priests must read daily under penalty of mortal sin, there are recounted as "miracles" the most grotesque and absurd fancies. Not a few saints are believed, subsequent to their decapitation, to have walked about *with their heads in their hands!* Jesuits, who are praised by Cardinal Hayes in his famous sermon as "the greatest contributors to ethnology" and other sciences, attribute the miracle that follows to their Father and Founder, St. Ignatius Loyola. We quote *it* as an example of ten thousand such.

"One day in Manresa when the pilgrim (Ignatius) was following the rocky road which is called Sobreroca, doubtless coming back from the Church del Carmen, he heard the sharp cries of a little girl bending over an old well which is still to be seen. A hen escaping from her care had just drowned itself and a crowd of curious onlookers were laughing at the lamentations of the poor little girl looking forward to paternal punishment. The heart of Ignatius was touched. He kneeled down and said a devout prayer; immediately the water of the well rising to the margin brought back the resuscitated hen which the saint with a smile gave back with his own hands to the little girl." An inscription in an oratory

near the well records: "Here Ignatius Loyola wrought in 1522 his first miracle, the resuscitation of a drowned hen." [1]

Catholics persist in maintaining in spite of the most obvious facts that Catholicism and science do not conflict; that *there is no dogma of the Church that runs counter to scientific facts.* But what accommodation can be found, to take one instance, between the dogma of "The Resurrection of the Dead" and the facts of science?

According to Catholic doctrine, and one must believe it as of the essence of the faith, at the "Last Judgment" all the dead will appear before the judgment seat of God in their true bodies, that is, in the physical bodies that they had when alive. This doctrine was formulated by Doctors of the Church when the indestructibility, individuality, and separability of material atoms was still believed in. But now, when every scientist sees in atoms a mere collection of electrical units, little more than points of force, without any permanency or individuality, what must be thought of the assembling of bodies long decayed? "Each electron," writes Bertrand Russell,[2] "is really a history, a series of events, not a single persistent identity." How can such "series of events" be collected together on the "Last Day" and built up anew into human bodies? Does the dogma of the "Resurrection of the Dead" not run counter to facts of science? The Catholic has blindly to seek comfort in the principle already quoted from the Catholic Encyclopedia: "When a clearly defined

[1] From "The Life of St. Ignatius," by Fr. Ribadeneira, S.J.
[2] "What I Believe," p. 9.

dogma contradicts a scientific assertion, *the latter* has to be revised and it will be found premature."

The Catholic Church does not encourage the development of the critical sense in her children, nor teach them that "it is always undesirable and often harmful to believe without proper evidence." [1] She does not lay stress upon the obvious fact that it is no less injurious to the faith to believe too much than to believe too little. She does not say with Dr. Fosdick that "the sense of sanctity is too valuable an article to be misused in holding up scientific progress," nor does she impress upon the minds of Catholics that *facts* consistently and continuously tested are the only basis for conclusions. She refuses to look to science for support and salvation, though it would seem that "science makes impossible any religion but the highest" (Canon Streeter).

What, then, is the present-day attitude of the Church towards Science? And what is the Catholic position with regard to scientific questions? To these questions Father D'Arcy, S.J., in his recent book "Catholicism" [2] answers as follows: "All else counts very little with Catholicism compared with its sacred commission to sanctify souls and to prepare them for immortal happiness. To gain this end it is prepared to sacrifice many of the accidental joys of life, if necessary, and it demands of its members that they should discipline their curiosity. Intellectual freedom can be bought at too dear a price . . . so the Catholic Church tells its members sometimes to leave new theories alone because the

[1] "Religion Without Revelation," Julian Huxley, p. 24.
[2] P. 72.

average man is not capable of assimilating them or of sifting the wheat from the chaff." But the Church goes even further than this for it tells its members that it is impossible for science to throw any further light upon the doctrines of the Church, and that as a consequence science has no part to play in religion. "If any one shall say," declared the Vatican Council, "that it is possible that with the progress of science a sense may ever be given to the doctrines proposed by the Church, other than that which the Church has understood and understands . . . *anathema sit.*" The Church therefore insists that the faithful admit, under pain of the sin of heresy, that she is in possession of the full and complete truth touching all matters of faith . . . and that science is essentially and eternally incompetent to aid her in this respect.

H. G. Wells writes in a recent novel that "the Roman Catholic Church . . . shields scores of millions securely through their lives from the least glimpse of our modern vision." However bitter and exaggerated this statement may be, it contains nevertheless a modicum of truth. The Church neither trusts modern science, nor gives it unequivocal encouragement.[1] She finds her dogmas and her methods conflict with those of science. She sees that her children who become devotees of sci-

[1] Professor Guignebert writes in "Christianity" (p. 484): "The Church declares herself to be the true friend of science and is offended by doubts commonly cast upon this assertion in the scientific world. She is right in the sense that research is approved and willingly encouraged which does not contradict her dogmatic theses in any way. She likes sciences which according to Schnitzer's homely expression 'consent to carry her train.' As for others she undertakes to canalise their currents skilfully, to limit the choice of their objects, and regulate their methods."

ence gradually withdraw themselves from her sheltering care. She professes "to revere true science . . . and to accept gladly its unassailable findings" (Cardinal Hayes) but at heart she fears and dislikes it. Her attitude towards science in fine resembles very closely her attitude towards democracy . . . in each case she offers lip-homage, but knowing that modern science tends to devolve into rationalism, and democracy into liberalism, she is strictly on her guard while secretly loathing the dreams and ideals of the present generation of thinkers.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SUB-CONSCIOUS—*ANATHEMA SIT!*

IT is not in the least to be wondered at that Catholicism should display antagonism to the theories of the unconscious that are promulgated by extreme Freudians today. These theories, inasmuch as they undermine responsibility, and reduce religious practices to mechanisms, impinge directly on the most sacred tenets of Catholicism, and tend to equate it with mere superstition. Naturally Catholics will have nothing to do with a theory that transmutes God into a feeling of awe, makes of heaven a wish-dream, interprets the Eucharist as a fetish and sin as the aura of taboos.

It is, however, to be wondered at that the Church should disregard and ignore the findings of sane and well-balanced psychologists concerning the unconscious, and that she should not be interested in availing herself of the principles of this new science so as to purge of dross certain tenets and practices of her children. It is quite in accord with the doctrine of her ascetical writers that in religious matters the "natural" should as far as possible be eliminated, and that motives should be carefully scrutinised so as to attain to greater "purity of intention." But though modern psychoanalysis is precisely the ideal instrument for detecting and elimi-

nating the "natural" in religious practices, and the impure element in motives, the Church sets her face against employing this instrument. It is characteristic of her to deny importance to "new methods" and to confine her confidence to what is old and sanctioned by long usage.

When the psychologist sets about investigating religious phenomena he has of course to poke his nose, perhaps somewhat irreverently, into all kinds of holes and corners, and has to "proceed on the assumption that for the purpose of science religious facts are no different in kind from other facts." [1] In other words, he has to prescind for the time being from the possible supernaturality of the phenomena he is investigating. This procedure is highly unpalatable to Catholicism, it savors too much of worldliness and naturalism, and it is thought by the Church that no good can come of such methods. Just as the Church resents the intrusion of learned linguists and anthropologists in Biblical research for the reason that they do not pursue their investigations in the spirit of faith and piety, so also she resents the intrusion of psychologists in the study of things sacred, because they do not conduct their analyses on bended knee.

As a result of this obscurantist attitude, there are today innumerable Catholics, practising their religion freely and for high motives as they think, who are the playthings of unconscious impulses about which they know nothing, and against the study of which they are warned. It is not too improbable a guess to say that every year several thousand pilgrims to Lourdes

[1] "Religious Consciousness," by Professor Pratt, p. 2.

travel thither under the irresistible, or all but irresistible impulse of wanderlust, and enjoy sensations and gratifications, which they foolishly deem to be holy, but which in reality have more to do with sex than with sanctity.

"Man," said Kipling, "is an imperfectly denatured animal, intermittently subject to the unpredictable reactions of an unlocated spiritual area." To the Catholic however the "spiritual area," is well known and under full control, and its "reactions" are governable by the free human will, guided and helped by the ever forthcoming divine grace of God. He holds that everything touching the mental side of religion is aboveboard, evident, and conscious, and there is no room at all for those mysterious uprushing impulses that psychologists attribute to the unconscious. Needless to say Catholics acknowledge no debt to modern psychology. This, however, is not so with the adherents of other forms of Christianity. Writing recently,[1] the Rev. Dr. Percy Dearmer, a distinguished Anglican divine, stated: "Psychology is exposing many illusions which have been common in religious history. It severely represses the desire for the marvellous and the abnormal. Celibacy, for instance, was regarded as a sort of short-cut to holiness; but we know now that compulsory celibacy tends to produce the repressed sex-complex, which is one of the elements most subversive to human integrity: and the evils which have hindered Christianity have been largely due to this complex, especially in Augustine, who has shaped theology both before and since the Reformation."

1 *The Outline,* (England), March 31, 1928.

Curiously enough, the demand for psychological enlightenment on the part of penitents in the Catholic confessional is very great. A confessor is asked more difficulties of a psychological kind than of any other kind. "Father, I have a haunting fear of death. How can I get rid of it?" . . . "Father, I feel terribly depressed when I enter the Church . . . what does it mean?" . . . "Father, I can't get myself to accede to my husband's demands on me. What am I to do about it?" . . . "Father, I feel sensually excited at Benediction, and I can't help it. Should I go to Benediction all the same?" . . . "Father, I simply detest my father, yet he has been very good to me. I don't know what the reason of it is. Can you advise me?" And so on . . . innumerable questions are asked, few of which can be satisfactorily answered without reference to the unconscious and its hidden activities. But the Church stands aghast at the theory of the unconscious motive, and the penitent remains unenlightened and in distress.

The nun who has visions of Jesus may not be told that she is suffering from sex-repression, and that her unconscious mind has fabricated her apparition. The novice who finds that he "cannot attend to his prayers," may not be analysed so as to discover what lies at the root of his "distractibility," and what unconscious motive is disturbing his peace. He is probably told that his distractions are "temptations of the devil." But what permanent help does such a suggestion give?

Catholics do not always realise that their greatest philosophers and psychologists were far from sharing in the superstition that the real motives of conduct are always conscious or that the will is free all the time.

Augustine in his "Confessions" describes very clearly, though figuratively, the play of unconscious motives. He goes so far even as to postulate *an unconscious will.* Aquinas admits frankly that "awareness [consciousness] is not co-extensive with the mind," in other words that the mind is at work, reasoning and planning, no doubt, without there being a complete notification of its doings at the focus of consciousness. Even, Ignatius Loyola,[1] teaches that impulses are experienced the source of which, be it the good or the bad spirit, is at first unrecognisable. Which amounts to saying, that the subconscious may drive one ahead, apparently on a mission of piety, but in reality on a mission, the hidden object of which is to satisfy carnal, deep-seated cravings. Here he puts his finger on one aspect of the unconscious motive.

In general Catholic psychologists have greatly exaggerated the scope of freedom, and man's power to control his impulses. It is only in order to defend freedom against the determinists, that they draw their horns, and content themselves with the claim that "at least some of man's acts are free." Fr. Maher, S.J.,[2] to take one example, while maintaining that some of our acts are free, and that therefore we are possessed of freedom of will, is far from teaching that all or even the majority of our acts are free. He recognised the determining influence on behaviour of hereditary trends, suggestion, and so forth. One wonders then, why in the sphere of religion, Catholic psychologists are unwilling to apply such principles of limited and occa-

1 "Spiritual Exercises" (Rules of Discernment of Spirits).
2 "Psychology" (Stonyhurst Series).

sional freedom, and to admit the wide scope of the unconscious motive.

The devout Catholic who has the habit of saying his prayers "so many times," nine times or seven times, or thrice three times and who feels restless until the right number is reached, is not aware that he is under the influence of an urge, other than the conscious motive of piety which is in his mind. This peculiar urge, called "arithmomania" through lack of a better name, founded perhaps on the rhythm of breathing or of heart-pulsation, is the hidden or unconscious motive of his praying "so many times."

I knew a little girl who was thought to be devout because she loved to keep lamps burning before the statues at her home, and because she used to spend all her pennies lighting candles before shrines. At "Benediction" when there was a great blaze of lights upon the altar she used to experience intense emotions of piety, and used to offer herself to God "with all her heart and all her soul."

A year or two later she was sent home from school to her parents. The school authorities declared that she had been caught on several occasions setting things on fire. They could do nothing to cure the little "firebug," and had to send her home. Needless to say, the unconscious motive of her religious exercises, lighting candles and so forth, was the pyromania impulse.

Many young men and women who enter religion do so under the influence of motives which are completely hidden from them. The plain girl, without admitting it to herself, finds in Convent life a compensation for her

lack of good looks. In choosing a way of life where good looks count for little she is reassuring her ego of the worthlessness of beauty, and of her equality with pretty girls. Timid youths and maidens often enter religion, ostensibly in order to cultivate their devotional trends, but in reality because they shirk facing reality. They choose religion because it offers them a way of escape from the conflicts that terrify them. The unconscious motive in such cases, in last analysis, should often prove to be sex-phobia. There are many who enter under the urge of a "call" or an inspiration which is a delusion fabricated by the sub-conscious. A young man hears, for instance, ringing in his ears, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity," and he interprets it as a divine warning to quit the world. But a little psychoanalysis might well have found for him the origin of this obsessional thought and sound, in anal-eroticism or glandular deficiency. As is well known, most vocations originate in the period following the discovery of sexual-power, and frequently the emotional reaction to this discovery serves to drive the delicately minded along the path of asceticism. During this period boys and girls are carried fast and far by currents in their personality of which they know nothing. They seem to choose this or that freely and deliberately, but in reality they are not more free than a straw on the surface of a river. The deep though vague yearnings within them for self-expression, and enhanced vitality, and larger, fuller living, prompt them to embark on adventures across the unchartered spiritual ocean . . . and they enter religion. When asked for their reasons, that is, their conscious motives, they "truthfully" af-

firm these to be: (1) to save their own souls, and (2) the souls of others, and (3) to dwell in a house where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. Needless to say the real dynamic of their conduct, *the unconscious motive*, is hidden from them.

Interesting illustration of the working of the unconscious motive in the mind of the average Catholic is to be found in his "denominationalism." This has already been referred to. The average Catholic's conviction of the unique truth of his faith reposes largely, though not of course entirely, on motives of the presence of which he is at best but vaguely aware. Brought up under the influence of the suggestion that Catholicism is the only true religion, and that all other religions are tissues of lies and errors, he never succeeds by study and inquiry in converting this suggestion into reasoned conviction and knowledge. He thinks his faith stands on the solid ground of knowledge and reason, but it rarely does. It reposes on the suggestions that were poured into his young ears. His strong attachment to the faith, which he also holds to be the outgrowth of reasoning, is largely an offshoot of the herd-instinct, which forbids him to wander from the fold. The dynamic which keeps people all their lives in this or that Church is seldom wholly conscious. Catholics, taught as they are that it is sinful to doubt about the truth of the faith, are prevented from "making conscious the unconscious factors of the faith." It is looked upon as dangerous intellectual arrogance to examine into these matters.

Every Catholic at one period or another undergoes the experience that psychologists call "conversion." He

suddenly realises that he is a sinner, a disgrace, a blotch, a filthy worm of the earth, in danger of damnation. With immense emotional excitement he plunges into the work of self-sanctification. Some word in a sermon preached by a missioner has touched and "converted" him, and he abandons all his evil ways. Presently the relapse comes and he is as bad if not worse than before. The phenomenon may, and often does repeat itself, and it is always interpreted as the working of divine grace. But is it not due (let us be content to say at times) to physiological and psychical causes? A big drinking bout, or an exceptional orgy of vice, is at times the starting point of the reaction. This in itself is sufficient to make one suspect the presence of the sub-conscious ego-rehabilitation motive. Until Catholic asceticism takes into account the workings of the economic laws of the submerged ego, there will be much "beating about the bush" in their writings on vocations, conversions, faith and such subjects.

In discussing "Forms of Religious Behaviour," [1] Dr. Everett Dean Martin draws attention to the purposeless character of pious and devotional acts, and he asks the very pertinent question, "what gives such acts their religious significance?" Among the pious acts of Catholics, such as making the signs of the cross, sprinkling with holy water, kissing the feet of statues, genuflecting, bowing, beating the breast and so forth, it is noticeable that whatever their symbolic value, *they are non-adaptive* to environment. As far as their physical entity goes they are waste-acts; they have no utility;

1 "The Mystery of Religion" (Harper), 1924.

they get one nowhere. Their results therefore in objective reality are nil. But in subjective reality what are their results? Dr. Martin holds that they represent "solutions of inner conflicts"; that, like the symptomatic acts of neurotics, they afford relief from an inner compulsion; release is achieved. "Much religious behaviour consists in the regular repetition of certain gestures, attitudes and verbal formulas in which one feels that one has done the right thing, not because he has made the response which an environmental situation would normally demand of him, but rather because he has performed certain stereotyped and biologically irrelevant movements in the prescribed manner." [1] In general, according to Dr. Martin, "religious behaviour like religious thought is a mechanism of redemption from the feeling of sin."

Though it is pretty well known that there is much ritual, and a multiplicity of rubrics to be observed, in Catholic services, it is doubtful if the enormous extent of the ceremonialism of Catholicism is adequately grasped. One doubts if any other religion ever went so far as Catholicism in this respect. Since the matter is in the eyes of psychologists very closely bound up with that of the working of the unconscious motive in Religion, it will be necessary to adduce an example. We shall take the conferring of the "Sacrament of Baptism," for the reason that in this particular Sacrament there seems less occasion for ceremony than in any other. It is *essentially* simple—a sprinkling of water, and an invocation—but the Church has hedged it round with an incredible amount of ceremonialism.

[1] "The Mystery of Religion" (Harper), 1924, p. 285.

In Baptism, as conferred today by the Church, there are (a) preparations before the ceremony, (b) questions to be asked of the sponsors, (c) the rite itself which, beginning at the Church Door, is continued at the Entrance to the Baptistery, and consummated at the Font, although there are things still to be seen to immediately after in the Sacristy.[1]

The preparations include the procuring and making ready of *oil of* catechumens, and chrism; salt; a ladle or ewer with which the water is poured on the child's head; a basin which receives the water as it falls from the head, for it must not be allowed to fall back into the font; cotton with which to wipe the parts where oil has been applied; a surplice: and a white and violet stole, or one, white on one side and violet on the other; crumbs of bread or salt or cotton for wiping the hands; a white veil to be placed on the child's head; a wax candle to be lighted before being presented to the sponsor. Also a Rituale, and the Baptismal register.

The priest having washed his hands, and put on a surplice and violet stole, but *not wearing a biretta,* stands at the Church door (accompanied by his acolytes). He puts questions to the Sponsor of the child who must carry it *on her right arm;* "What do you ask of the Church of God?" *Ans.* "Faith." "What doth Faith avail thee?" *Ans.* "Life everlasting," etc.

Then the priest thrice *blows upon* the face of the child—*breathing* upon will not do. The blowing should not be done in the form of a cross (as is customary in some places). The priest says at the same time; "Go

1 "Hand-book of Ceremonies," by J. B. Müller, S.J., trans. by A. P. Ganss, S.J., (Herder, 1911). Also "Rituale" (Gill, Dublin).

out of him, unclean spirit, and yield place to the holy Spirit, the Paraclete! . . ." Then with his thumb he makes the sign of the cross on the forehead and breast of the child. Müller adds; "In making the various signs of the cross the priest does not touch the child, except when the parts upon which the sign of the cross is to be made are expressly mentioned; otherwise they are made over the child's body." There follow prayers, and the priest at the prayer "Omnipotens Sempiterne Deus," lays his right hand upon the child (though actual contact is not obligatory), only for a moment, gently, and then holds it extended above the child. The prayer implores the eternal Father to "burst all the chains of Satan with which the child had been bound."

Next there is the very interesting ceremony of the exorcism and blessing of the *salt* which is to be presently placed in the child's mouth, "with the thumb and forefinger."

The prayer over the salt reads; "I exorcise you, salt (creature), in the name of the Omnipotent Father. . . . I exorcise you by the living God . . . who made you for the safety of the human race, and ordered you to be consecrated to the service of people coming into the faith, that in the name of the Holy Spirit, you may make this Sacrament effectual in putting to flight the demon. Hence we implore Thee, Lord God . . . to sanctify this creature, salt, so that it may be to all receiving it a perfect medicine remaining in their bowels. . . ." The priest then places salt in the child's mouth.

The priest then makes another onslaught on the

Devil—praying he says: "I exorcise you, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father . . . that you go out and recede from this servant of God. . . . Therefore, accursed Spirit, hear your sentence, and give honour to God. . . ."

There follow many more prayers and the priest "placing the extremity (the left extremity) of his stole against the child's breast introduces him into the Church (hitherto they have been at the door of the Church)." The child is still of course a little pagan.

At the Font the first duty is to finally exorcise the Devil. "During the exorcism *the priest stands with his back to the font* as though he were preventing the child's entrance."

The Priest begins again; "I exorcise *you, every unclean spirit,* (te, omnis spiritus immunde) in the name of the Father Almighty . . . that you go out of this image of God. . . ." Then the priest puts his thumb in his mouth and applies the saliva to the child's ears and nose. Fr. Müller writes; "the application of saliva is made by means of the thumb, not with the forefinger; the form of the cross is not prescribed; it is not required to touch first one nostril then the other; but it suffices to touch the nose but once." All the details that Fr. Müller rejects are made matters of fierce controversy by others.

The priest questions the Sponsor; "Dost thou renounce Satan? And all his works? And all his pomps?" The Sponsor of course renounces Satan and his works and pomps, on behalf of the child.

The oil of catechumens is then applied to the child by the priest in the form of a cross between his shoul-

ders on the breast and on the back and having prayed he elicits a profession of faith from the Sponsor.

It would be tedious to enter further into the details touching the sprinkling or immersion, the application of chrism, the cleansings, the presentation of the lighted wax-candle, the crowning with the white veil, and so forth. From beginning to end it is a veritable orgy of ceremonialism, each detail of which is the subject of the most reverent attention.

Elsewhere in this volume we have described the dramatic instinct of Catholicism in confession. In baptism this instinct reveals itself in a still more striking way. The priest, representing the Church, stands at the church door. He asks the would-be Christian, "What seek you?" Then as though his breath was the Spirit of God he "blows upon" the catechumen and warns the Devil within him to yield place to God. With his hand he makes the sign of the cross first, and then holds it over the catechumen's head as though overshadowing him with God's power. It is all as though a mystery play were being enacted! Nature is invoked, and salt is purified of its subjection to the Devil, and is utilised as a weapon against him. Again the Devil is threatened and the catechumen is led by a Sacred cord (the Stole) into the Sanctuary. But the Devil, as is supposed, is still within the catechumen, and so the priest stands in defence of the Holy Font. Will the Devil never yield to the Higher Power? Once again there is exorcism, and after it saliva, the mysterious juice of life, goes from priest to catechumen. Now, as it were, he is half a Christian, sharing in the priest's

super-nature. Strengthened by this force the Catechumen renounces Satan . . . "and all his works and pomps." From the living breath to salt, from salt to saliva, from saliva now to sacred oil—the catechumen is signed with oil on breast and back. He is ready now to become a member of the Church—he has quit the army of the Devil and has entered the army of the Lord—he is baptised with water, water, the life-giving, cleansing stream! Chrism confirms and sanctifies him; the white veil is his uniform; the lighted wax-candle is his sword. The drama ends with the documentary enrolment of the young soldier. No doubt a very wonderful, a very beautiful mystical drama, but redolent of the deepseated modes of thought and fancy of the primitive human—the product of the unconscious mind of man working on the new-given Sacrament of Christ.

When one embraces Catholic teaching in a wide sweep of vision one is struck on the one hand by its insistency on the child-attitude in the faithful, and the dogmatic, Czar-attitude in the government of the Church. In this sense the Church is a great family, many children and a strong tribal father. The children must submit; the father rules and there is no gainsaying his right. Be the faithful old or young, learned or ignorant, rich or poor, they must remain fixed in the child-mind state vis-à-vis of their religion. It is not for them to make reply or to investigate or to interpret. The father's word is law, final and absolute. The attitude of the Catholic is called, falsely as I think, one of regression. It is not so much "regression" as life-long "fixation"

in the child-mind. Catholics are for ever "babes fed upon the milk of the Lord." Infantile emotional interests persist. The natural craving for protection is amply satisfied.

Churches, as Dr. Everett Dean Martin has pointed out,[1] which try to set up some other mode of religious thought than the oldfashioned mystery mode signally fail. "It is a significant fact," states Dr. Martin, "that those religious bodies which have tried to reform; and bring their practices and their dogmas into harmony with modern thought, fail in popular support to just the extent that the process of modernisation is thorough-going. . . . The masses appear to have little interest in a religion which is founded on "reason" or in a church which speaks the language of today."

If the "father-image" in the minds of theologians explains their mental reconstruction of the Church as a great family, the "sense of guilt" as epitomised in the doctrine of original sin explains an immense amount of their dogmatic teaching. Who can doubt but that the great Augustine, the arch-theologian of original sin, was himself a victim of the inner stain-complex. His confessions reveal him as one acutely sensitive to uncleanliness of soul. Sin was for him a burning sore. It was objective, real, loathsome, degrading.

The common Catholic teaching on this matter [2] is that "owing to the sin of Adam the entire human race lost its original sanctity and righteousness . . . man was thereby impaired in soul and body, by nature spir-

[1] "The Mystery of Religion," p. 248.
[2] "A Complete Catechism," (Fander), (N. Y., 6th ed.,), p. 102.

itually dead, fallen off, and separated from God . . ." We all were by nature "children of wrath" . . . because . . . "we were dead in sin" (Eph. 2, 3.) . . . Ignorance, concupiscence, proneness to evil; and all sorts of hardships, pains, calamities, and at last death . . . were the fatal consequences.

The vision of man with darkened intellect, weakened will, bent on evil, obsessed the minds of all post-Augustine theologians. Man was taught to think of himself as fallen in nature, and of his chief duty as that of "purging his members from their native evil." The Church offering "redemption from sin" through baptism became the "house of refuge," and of escape from the curse that had fallen on the human race. Hence the spirit of pessimism in the mind of the Church, in all that regards human tendencies and aspirations; hence too the building up of great barriers against the influence of the unregenerate world. Who can then doubt but that, back of much of the Church's teachings and dogmas there is the working of the racial inferiority complex? Who can wonder at the explosions of this complex, in the cases of over-wrought mystics, in descriptions of themselves as ulcers, sores, filthy and vile worms, refuse and offal?

We have but touched upon a few of the characteristics of the psychology of Catholicism, having in mind to bring out the seriousness of the Church's disregard for the unconscious and the unconscious motive. Illustrations similar to those we have dwelt upon might be sought for and found in the Church's intolerance of criticism; in her preference, in the political field, for

autocratic forms of government; in her patronising attitude towards science; in her tolerance for and indulgence towards superstitious practices. In all this there appears the curious enigma of Catholicism, its sincere love for truth that is divine or ancient, and its unwillingness to polish the glasses through which it looks upon the face of nature.

The Church *in the eyes of the psychologist* is a very old man, who is at once credulous and cynical, autocratic and yet affectionate to those who serve him with docility. An old man who has little respect for modern ideas or modern progress, and who insists on the etiquette of the past. An old man who is often carried away by irritability and jealousy without his knowing it; who has seen days when he was greatly honoured and is somewhat piqued that his word is no longer taken for law. An old man who defends his rights by an appeal to their recognition under the old régime; who has an old-fashioned sense of honour, which does not take into account the rights of the lower or younger classes. An old man essentially narrow in his outlook, essentially conservative, essentially fanatical. An old man who no longer reads or keeps in touch with the movements of social ideas, and who is prone to deny the existence of the changes that he wots not of.

CHAPTER XVIII

IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH DEMOCRATIC?

GOVERNOR ALFRED E. SMITH, as events afterwards showed, expressed the belief and feeling of the average American Catholic when he declared: "I recognise no power in the institutions of my Church to interfere in the practice of the Constitution of the United States or in the execution of the laws of my country. . . . I believe in the absolute freedom of conscience for all men and in the equality of all Churches, all sects and all beliefs before the law as a matter of right and not as a matter of favour . . . I believe in the American doctrine of the separation of the Church and State." This *credo* of Governor Smith, sanctioned as it has been, implicitly and explicitly, by Catholic churchmen and laymen alike, constitutes an emphatic "yes" to the question at the head of this chapter.

When Mr. Charles C. Marshall pointed out very clearly and cogently [1] that Governor Smith's democracy ran counter to certain teachings of the *Roman* Church as he called it and that the Roman Church was very far from being a democratic institution, he was accused by Catholic writers of misrepresentation. No Catholic had a good word to say about him, for was

[1] "The Roman Catholic Church in the Modern State," and "Governor Smith's American Catholicism" (Dodd, Mead, 1928).

he not at once robbing the Church as a whole, and the American Church in particular, of her true glory? "Were it not for the Catholic Church," wrote the Editor of the *Catholic News* (December 15, 1928), "there would be no such thing as government by the people"! From all sides stout defenders of the orthodoxy of Governor Smith stepped forward. "What doctrine of the Church has he renounced?" asked the Jesuit Editor of *America*.[1] Mr. Marshall's argument is "logical legerdemain" wrote the Paulist Editor of *The Catholic World*. "Whatever may be held in theory," declared Fr. Francis P. Duffy,[2] "all American Catholics from Cardinal Hayes to a child in school believe that our political method of separation of Church and State is the best." Father Duffy affirmed as evidence of what he called "*the very strong Romanism*" of the American Catholic Church that "there is no country in the world where the Pope's decrees are received and carried out with more ample enthusiasm."

The situation is therefore curious and interesting. On the one hand, there are many who, on the publication of Governor Smith's *credo*, recognised at once a startling divergence between the democracy of American Catholicism, and the politico-religious doctrine of Rome. On the other hand, there stands the vast majority of Catholics, deeply imbued with the spirit of American democracy, and quite unconscious of the divergence between their tenets and the teachings of Pius IX and Leo XIII. They hold that (as the Editor

[1] *The New York Times*, September 28, 1928.
[2] *Herald Tribune*, January 14, 1929.

of *The Catholic News* put it) "the Catholic Church throughout the ages has given the most notable examples of democracy in all history"; they heartily agree with the Duffy doctrine "that separation of Church and State *is best*," but they forget that Father Duffy's views give no index as to what Rome thinks upon the question. The doctrine of "separation" has been condemned many times by Rome and there is manifest evidence that the particular case of the separation between Church and State here in America fails to find favour with Rome. Had Rome been satisfied she would have said so long since! It belongs to her and not to Father Duffy to decide "what is best for America." Such at least is the Catholic doctrine of Church Government. And as a matter of fact Leo XIII in his letter to the American bishops declared that the Church "would bring forth more abundant fruits *if in addition to liberty she enjoyed the favour of the laws and the patronage of public authority.*" In other words, he betrayed dissatisfaction at the Status of the Church in America. "It would be very erroneous," he wrote, "to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church." [1] In view of Leo's teaching on this matter, and in view of the clearly expressed antagonism of the Church to "separation," it is hard to see "*very strong Romanism*" in the attitude of American Catholics.

At the risk of over-stressing the divergence between Catholic American thought, as regards "separation," and Roman thought, let me add a quotation from an outstanding lay-champion of Catholicism, namely Mr.

[1] Encyclical on "Catholicity in the United States." Leo XIII.

Michael Williams:[1] "We are talking" . . . he writes, "about the American Constitution of today *as it stands* and as every honest American hopes it will stand . . . and to that Constitution which states 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion' . . . American Catholics give their full and undivided allegiance not in spite of belonging to the Catholic Church but largely because they are Catholics." Here Mr. Williams has the effrontery to pretend (and in so doing to put himself forward as the spokesman of American Catholics) that *it is true Catholicism* to give "full and undivided allegiance" to a relationship between Church and State that Rome has expressly condemned—and to pray that such a relationship may never be changed. Is not Mr. Williams aware that it is the clearly defined doctrine of the Church that "*The State ought not to be separated from the Church,*" and that "*It is still expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State to the exclusion of all others.*"[2] Can one consistently adhere to the American principle of democracy and the Constitutions of the Catholic Church?

American Catholics, as it seems, through a process of unconscious rationalisation have formed the opinion that (1) the government of the Church is democratic, and (2) that throughout history the Church has on the whole favoured democracy. On each of these two points it will be necessary to dwell. One might with justice conclude from such functions as the "kissing of the Pope's toe," and the "kissing of the bishop's ring"

[1] "Catholicism and the Modern Mind," p. 142.
[2] Cf. Syllabus, Pius IX, nos. 55 and 77.

on bended knee, and from the ritual and regal splendour of Roman Courts, that the spirit of democracy was alien to the Church. However, as a fact there were important democratic elements in the constitution of the early Church—in particular, autonomy of local churches; the right of the local Christians, lay and clerical, to elect their bishops; the right of the Roman people, lay and clerical, to elect the Pope; and lastly the right of the lower ranks of the clergy, together with the people, to share in the government and administration of Church affairs.

In early times the local Churches enjoyed a considerable amount of autonomy. The power of the Church as a whole was decentralised, and though Rome was first among the Churches, she rarely interfered in matters of local concern. In fact to all appearance the Churches of the East and West were co-equal with Rome. Such was the state of things in the early centuries. Today all power is centralised in Rome, and the "Churches" of the East and West have no autonomy. The Bishop of Rome rules as a Czar over all the "Churches." Other bishops are little more than pastors.

As regards the election of bishops; "until the sixth century, the clergy and the people elected the bishop, on condition that the election should be approved by the neighbouring bishops . . . in the East the clergy and primates or chief citizens nominated three candidates from whom the metropolitan chose the bishop." [1] Probably this state of things lasted up to a much later date. However in 1139, the Lateran Council, interfered and handed over the election of bishops to the Cathe-

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. II, p. 583.

dral Chapters. In due time the Bishop of Rome acquired the exclusive right of choosing and nominating bishops, and every vestige of democratic election has since disappeared. In some places the local clergy submit three names to Rome, but their rights in the matter end there and Rome nominates whom she pleases. The Episcopacy was, in the early Church, a strong bulwark against centralisation. Today, it is no longer a bulwark against centralisation, but one of its instruments.

In losing their right to elect their bishops, the Catholic people have lost all control over the doctrinal decisions of the Church. Had they still bishops to represent their views and wishes at the General Councils of the Church they would have at least indirect control over dogmatic decrees. There would be less likelihood of general laws being passed, and dogmas proclaimed, which are unintelligible to the people. But now the people and the local clergy have no influence whatever, direct or indirect, upon the General Councils of the Church. The Pope who nominates bishops, and dismisses them at will, can also create new dioceses. He can thus create as many bishops as he thinks fit and so can control General Councils. He nominates "*Episcopi in Partibus*" bishops whose dioceses exist only in name, who have no subjects, who represent no one, who "give testimony to the faith" of none but themselves. Through such the Pope can always secure a majority for his personal views.

We come now to the disappearance of the third democratic element of the early Church, that which consisted in the election of the Pope himself by the Ro-

mans, lay and clerical. In 1059, by an edict "*In Nomine Domini*" Nicholas II abrogated the right of the Romans to elect the Pope, and placed the right of election in the hands of the Cardinals. He constituted the "College of Cardinals," which was presently to grow apace in power and influence, and to exercise the right of governing the Church during inter-regnums.[1]

There had been many grave abuses in the elections of various Popes, and the Roman factions and the Emperors had caused trouble. But the new law effected little improvement, for the Cardinals' intrigues though less violent were no more disinterested than the intrigues of the Roman factions. Besides the influence of Emperors over the papal elections continued. What is significant in the decree is that it robbed the lay Catholic of his voice in choosing Christ's vicar, and it set up a new and very important factor in Church Government, that was unknown heretofore, namely the College of Cardinals. "It took away from the Roman Church," writes Mr. Marshall,[2] "every essential element of representative government, demonstrating that the principle of 'government by the consent of the governed' has no place in the constitution of the Church." Apropos of the rise of the Cardinals Professor Guignebert writes [3] "As [their] powers increased they became organised and the college of Cardinals became the 'Senate of the Holy See.' In 1245 they secured the precedence

[1] "Efforts to obtain the authentic text of this decree (In Nomine Domini) caused considerable controversy in the nineteenth century. That the discussion did not result in a consensus of opinion on the matter need not surprise, if it be remembered that thirty years after the publication of the decree complaints were heard regarding the divergency of the text." Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. XI, p. 55.

[2] "The Roman Catholic Church in the Modern State," p. 157.

[3] "Christianity," p. 338.

over the Archbishops thus constituting themselves a new degree in the hierarchy unknown to tradition, a collective authority at the Pope's side, substantially irresponsible, and soon powerful enough to be a counterpoise to that of the Sovereign Pontiff himself. For two centuries, the fourteenth and fifteenth, it remains an unsettled question whether the government of the Church will not become an oligarchy; and the periods in which the Holy See is vacant, which on different occasions are fairly prolonged, demonstrate that the Pope in person is no longer absolutely indispensable to the functioning of the Roman administration. The Pope passes but the Curia remains: he is often an old man when he assumes the Tiara; he has not the strength nor indeed the means needed to dispense with customs and traditions and all that goes into the making of these formidable passive powers which inhere in all stagnant and deeply rooted administrative organisations."

The College of Cardinals was responsible, in the fourteenth century, for what was probably the greatest disaster that ever befell the Catholic Church . . . the "Great Schism." Following on the election of Urban VI to the Papacy, the Cardinals in order to escape the reforms which that rather impetuous but honest Pope contemplated, proceeded to elect an anti-Pope, Clement VII. Referring to this catastrophe [1] the Catholic Encyclopedia states; "Indisputably the long exile at Avignon was its principal cause, as it diminished the credit of the Popes *and inversely increased the ambition of the Cardinals, who were always striving to ob-*

[1] Vol. XV, pp. 216, 217.

tain more influence in the government of the Church. . . . If the genius of a Gregory VII or an Innocent III was scarcely able to triumph over the ambition of the Cardinals . . . these impediments could not but shipwreck the inconstant and quarrelsome Urban."

From such an incident we can gather how grave was the step taken by Nicholas II in abolishing the democratic mode of electing the Pope, and in setting up a privileged aristocracy in the Church. The Church was profoundly changed by the new instrument of government . . . the Curia. Today the Cardinals still control the Church's policy, "keep the Pope in his place," and outmanœuvre him if he attempts to introduce reforms which displease "the Sacred College." It is to the advantage of the Curia to keep the ordinary episcopacy in a state of subjection, and to maintain all the complicated procedures of the Roman Courts. Needless to say the Cardinals are opposed to any form of decentralisation, the immediate results of which would be a lessening of sources of revenue at Rome.

The fourth element of democracy that has disappeared is the participation of the laity and lower clergy in the administration of the Church and even in *Plenary Councils.* Today, the lower clergy are regarded with suspicion and almost with contempt by Rome.[1] They have less influence with the rulers of the Church than sergeants in an army have with the General Staff. The laity count for nothing, and very pointedly Pius X described as "*most pernicious heresy*" the opinion that they should be allowed to initiate reforms in the Church.

[1] In his Encyclical on "Modernism" (*"Pascendi Gregis"*), Pius X plainly revealed this attitude.

However learned or holy, they are denied the right to speak in the name of the Church or to defend in public her doctrines. "When there is question of the official teaching of religious doctrine the laity is neither competent nor authorised to speak in the name of God and the Church. Consequently they are not allowed to preach in the Church or to undertake to defend the Catholic doctrine in public discussions with heretics." [1] The only privilege now enjoyed securely by the Catholic laity is that of "accepting and obeying the decisions, judgments, orders, and directions of their lawful pastors in matters of doctrine, morals, discipline and even administration." [2]

As a result of the disappearance of the four democratic elements to which I have referred the Church has become highly centralised. *In fact as well as in theory* the Pope now enjoys the position described by Gratian: "he is above all the laws of the Church, and can use them according to his will; he alone is judge and cannot be judged." Added to this the Pope is now, even when unassisted by an Ecumenical Council, the supreme and infallible teacher of faith and morals. There only remains the restoration of "temporal power" by the settlement of the Roman Question to make him the most perfect embodiment of autocracy that the world has ever seen.

The second assumption of American Catholics is that throughout history the Church has favoured democracy, that "were it not for the Catholic Church there would be no such thing as government by the people." [3] One

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. VIII, p. 750.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *The Catholic News,* December 15, quoted above.

should think that the history of such Popes as Alexander VI, Julius II or Gregory VII or indeed the history of the Inquisition alone would suffice to dispose of such an opinion. Of Gregory VII (afterwards canonised by the Church for his eminent virtue) the Catholic Encyclopedia writes: "He claimed for the Papacy supremacy over emperor, kings and princes . . . as successor of the apostles of Christ he claimed supreme authority in both spiritual and secular affairs." When deposing Henry IV of Germany in the course of the "War of Investiture" he solemnly proclaimed (Rome, 1076): "I depose him from the government of the whole Kingdom of Germany and Italy, release all Christians from their oath of allegiance, forbid him to be obeyed as king . . . and as Peter's successor bind him with the fetters of *anathema.*" The history of the Church bristles with a thousand such incidents, any one of which would serve to throw doubt upon any claim that the Church has been on the whole a democratic institution. To grasp, however, the full extent of the *undemocratic* trend of the Church's policy and conduct in the past one has to bear in mind her doctrine of the "Two Swords" or "Two Powers."

The doctrine of the "Two Swords" or in its more modern form "The Union of Church and State" is the foundation of the political philosophy of the Church. The Church holds in brief that while the State is supreme in purely secular affairs, she must play the rôle of servant and supporter of the Church (the Catholic Church) in all that concerns religion. In mixed matters it is the Church which must decide what appertains to the State and what to the Church. This theory which

has proved throughout history the most explosive of all political theories is obviously in sharp opposition to the "Civic Primacy of the People." [1] The doctrine of the "Two Swords" was first formulated by Pope Gelasius I in the fifth century. Later, in 1302, it was thus enunciated by Pope Boniface VIII: "There are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal; the first borne by the Church; the second on behalf of the Church; the first by the hand of the priest; the second by that of the king but under the direction of the priest" . . . as explained by authoritative and recent Catholic writers [2] the doctrine teaches that "the State is bound to render due worship to God. . . . Due worship is that of the religion of Christ entrusted to the Church . . . the State must also protect the Church in the exercise of her functions . . . the State is even under obligation to promote the spiritual interests of the Church . . . the Church clearly has a perfect right to demand the fulfilment of these duties . . . to *exact them authoritatively from the State.*" It is more or less beside the mark for Catholic apologists like Dr. John A. Ryan to pretend that these doctrines do not apply in America but only in predominantly Catholic countries. To whom, if not to the citizens of such "godless" States as America do the words of Leo XIII apply? "Justice therefore forbids and reason itself forbids the State to be godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness . . . namely to treat the various religions alike." [3]

[1] Consult "The Roman Catholic Church in the Modern State," by Charles C. Marshall, for an excellent discussion of the subject.
[2] Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. XIV, p. 252.
[3] Encyclical on "Human Liberty."

In regard to tolerance, which Governor Smith described as "the absolute freedom of conscience for all men" and in which he expressed his belief, the Church's attitude throughout history has been that such a doctrine is *madness* and the outcome of indifference. Thus Gregory XIII [1] declared: "And out of this most corrupt fountain of indifference there flows this erroneous opinion or rather madness that the freedom of conscience of each individual ought to be asserted and vindicated." Tolerance in the modern sense has again and again been condemned by the Church, and as Lord Acton pointed out "for four centuries Rome taught that no Catholic could be saved who denied that heretics should be burned." The Catholic Encyclopedia is in this respect more outspoken and sincere than are recent Catholic apologists in this country who identified the *credo* of Governor Smith with Roman Catholicism. "The present-day legislation against heresy," states the Encyclopedia, "has lost nothing of its ancient severity; but the penalties on heretics are now only of the spiritual order." The phrase "only of the spiritual order" is, however, somewhat misleading, as the excommunicated Catholics of Rhode Island, whose business and good name has suffered as a result of their heresies, know to their cost.[2] American Catholics, in establishing their claim that the Church should be recognised as democratic, have of late dwelt repeatedly on the fact that "the Church does not interfere in politics." Thus Father Francis P. Duffy: "The Catholic Church has proven that it does not interfere in politics. It was not

[1] "Mirari Vos," 1832.
[2] Their case will be dealt with in the chapter which follows.

a matter of policy but of traditional practice for generations." [1] Speaking at Cincinnati (November 20) the Most Rev. Dr. J. T. McNicholas referred more directly to the recent Presidential election in his rebuttal of the charge that the Catholic Church had taken an active part in the election. "I speak officially," he said, "when I say that the Catholic Church in Cincinnati is interested in no political party nor in political candidates of any party. *It experiences no disappointment because of the defeat of one party* nor does it rejoice in the victory of the other. . . . As an American citizen I protest against the insinuation made that my Church because of a Catholic candidate or for any other reason whatever in any way attempted to control my political affiliations or to give me the slightest indication how I or any other Catholic citizen of this jurisdiction should vote." [2]

In spite, however, of this noble declaration the good bishop could not refrain from making his own contribution to politics for he added a moment later; "*I wish as a Catholic bishop, in the interest of religion, to protest against any party that is willing to be beneficiary of attacks upon any man's religion.*" There *was* therefore (and always is) a loop-hole for the Church to mix in politics, namely, "the interest of religion" . . . In "the interest of religion" the Church *rightly* (according to Bishop McNicholas) might "protest against the party" which contained *bigots*. But as "*bigots*" are those who in the eyes of Catholics criticise Catholicism

[1] *The World,* December 17, 1928.
[2] *The Catholic News,* November 24, 1928. The point here raised will be again touched upon in the next chapter.

unfairly, it is unlikely that the Church will ever be bereft of an excuse for entering the political arena.[1]

The Church has always claimed the right to interfere in politics, on the grounds that she is the supreme guardian of morals, and that politics belong to morals. "Now I may be asked," said Cardinal Manning, on one occasion, "Why should the Holy Father touch on any matter of politics at all? For this plain reason; because politics are a part of morals. What the moral law of the ten Commandments is to the individual, politics are to society . . . politics are morals in the widest sense." Actually in Italy, France, and Mexico, she is interfering in a very decided way. The Fascist policy in some matters has been publicly opposed by the Church. In France, during the 1928 election, Cardinal Dubois issued "a public declaration of policy to be followed by the Catholics of France during the elections." [2] In Mexico the whole Calles régime is being fought by the Church. However, it may be more interesting to refer

[1] *The Catholic News,* (January 19, 1929), an unofficial organ of the church, in an editorial reveals how the church connects up religion and politics—even in the sordid business of office hunting.

Quotation: "But Col. Donovan happens to be a Catholic. And the Ku Klux Klan and other forces of religious intolerance are objecting to him strenuously because of his religion. If we are to believe the Washington correspondents Mr. Hoover is greatly disturbed over the situation. But it is his own fault that the Ku Klux Klan has the effrontery to interpose a veto on any of his Cabinet appointees. He and the men who conducted his Presidential campaign played politics with the Kluxers. Instead of outspokenly and honestly repudiating the support of the forces of intolerance the Republican candidate and his advisers accepted the aid that came to them, besmirched as it was with forgery and slander against the opposing candidate's religion. Had Mr. Hoover come out during the campaign and told the Ku Klux Klan and its allies he did not want their aid these disreputables would not now be camped upon his doorstep."

[2] "The Roman Catholic Church in the Modern State," p. 254.

to a definite case of "interference" which brings out clearly the Church's use of spiritual threats, in connection with purely political issues.

In 1892 in Ireland there was staged a very exciting election in County Meath in which Mr. Charles S. Parnell, the Protestant leader of the Irish people, made an effort to capture the Constituency against the wishes of the Church.[1] He was defeated, but appealed on the grounds that undue influence had been exercised to bring about his defeat, and three Judges decided in his favour and unseated the nominee of the Church. Among the evidence adduced during this election trial we find quotations from the pastoral of Dr. McNulty, the Catholic Bishop of the diocese, in which he stated: "Parnellism, like many of the great rebellious movements which heresy has from time to time raised against the Church, sprung from the root of sensualism and sin. . . . He (the Bishop) would approach the deathbed of a profligate or drunkard with greater confidence in his salvation than that of a Parnellite. . . . *The women who had the least Parnellite sympathies were worse than abandoned women.* . . . The dying Parnellite will hardly dare to face the justice of his Creator . . ." etc. The priests of the diocese strove to emulate their bishop in denouncing Parnellism. One (a Fr. Fay) declared that Parnellites were "followers of Garibaldi" and that "he would not forgive any one who voted for him, now or ever." Another priest (a Fr. Tynan) said: "*You ought to vote for your religion and not give your priests a slap in the face.* I won't attend you with the Blessed Sacrament when you are

[1] "The Life of Timothy Healy," by Liam O'Flaherty.

dying but leave you to your conscience." There were many other clerical declarations of the same kind, conveying spiritual threats against those who should dare to vote for Mr. Parnell. And yet in this election there was no *religious issue*. Mr. Parnell had enjoyed the confidence of the priests and people up to a few months previously when his divorce case became public. The Meath Election is but one of a hundred similar instances adducible from the history of Ireland and other countries where the Church has in a perfectly indefensible way exercised undue influence in purely civil affairs.

Most of the matters touched upon in this chapter have, not long since, been more or less thoroughly discussed. Perhaps it is now time to draw certain inferences, the outcome of these discussions on the political tenets of Catholics and the Church's political philosophy. It would seem that the average American Catholic is at heart, and largely in practice, a true democrat. He holds democratic views on tolerance, non-interference of the Church in politics, equality of all religions before the State, and the right of each one to choose for himself his own religion. In other words, the average Catholic has unconsciously and insensibly assimilated the prevalent "liberalist" views of his day. He is unaware of the contradiction between his mental outlook on political philosophy and the outlook of his Church. The priests, even the bishops of this country, have like the lay Catholics assimilated the doctrine of liberalism. Some of them have made efforts to find justification for their tenets in Catholic theology, but their efforts have failed. They have given up in despair the impossible

task of reconciling the "Syllabus" of Pius IX and their attitude towards the modern State.

The "Theory of the Two Swords" is dead as far as American Catholicism is concerned. Leo XIII's pious hope that the Catholic Church here will win the favour of the laws and the special patronage of the government is looked upon as an idle and a futile dream. The plain American Catholic nourishes no similar hope. He is satisfied to let matters stand as they are . . . Meanwhile Rome is pacified by bounteous largess.

CHAPTER XIX

"THE BUSHEL AND THE LIGHT"—IN AMERICA

AMERICAN Catholics have of late agreed that the time has come for displaying the light that for so long lay hidden under the bushel. A vast campaign of "enlightenment" has been inaugurated under the auspices of the N.C.W.C. The Knights of Columbus have established "open forums"; *America*, the Jesuit weekly, proclaims "Advertising the Remedy"; the Paulist radio WLWL is busy nightly at the great work, while innumerable Catholic publications have joined hands to "stamp out bigotry."

American Catholics have become obsessed of late with a bigotry-phobia. Father Harney, a learned Jesuit,[1] in discussing the origin of bigotry, tells his readers that, "*There are even now some Americans who believe that priests have horns, and would be surprised to learn that instead of cloven hoofs each priest is blessed with two honest-to-goodness feet.*" He calls for "not half-measures but an extensive, adequate programme" to deal with the "enormousness" of the problem of *enlightenment*. Whether or not it be welcome to the American people to be subjected to an immense educational campaign on behalf of Catholicism, the campaign is to go through. And furthermore the enlightenment is to be

[1] *America*, January 26, 1929.

dealt out in no apologetic manner.[1] "Let bigots rave! In face of misunderstanding, and ignorance, and sometimes lies, be interested in fact. *High hat the haters.* Get over that inferiority complex."

In Cincinnati, shortly after the results of the election were declared the National Council of Catholic Men at their annual convention heard Archbishop McNicholas and Bishop Stritch describe "the recent foul attacks made by bigots upon the Catholic Church and its members." Archbishop McNicholas in the course of his speech said:[2]

"Our love of the Church has been deepened and rendered more ardent because of a recent crisis in which her fair name has been foully blackened. The Catholic Church has been held up to men as an object to be hated and feared. She has been described as Anti-Christ, the epitome of all evil. She has been scorned as an alien, incapable of assimilating American ideals. She is said to await only the opportunity to effect the destruction of American institutions. No clean-minded man could think, much less could any decent man give expression to, some of the things that have been broadcast about our sweet and tender Mother."

It was resolved by the N.C.C.M. "*that the Church shall be known as she really is.*" Then the convention was the scene of an unfortunate "outburst" on the part of a distinguished priest.

A certain Joseph Bruns, a delegate from New Albany, Ind., suggested that Catholic laymen should co-operate

[1] Communion address to Holy Name Society members, by Asst.-Director, Arch-diocese Union, Rev. Eugene J. Callaghan. *The Catholic News,* May 19, 1928.

[2] *The Catholic News,* November 24, 1928.

with their Protestant associates with the purpose of allaying bigotry. To this the Rev. Dr. Peter Guilday, Professor of Church History at the Catholic University of Washington, replied, as follows: "Co-operate with them? For fifteen years we gave them co-operation and did everything in our power to assist and enlighten them as to the true religion and practices of the Church, and then in the stress of the last election they allowed their bishops and ministers to attack and vilify us because we are Catholics. *We are through with co-operating.* Eleven million persons voted for Governor Smith at the polls who were not Catholics, it is said, but when because he was a Catholic he was the subject of some of the most dastardly attacks ever levelled at a citizen of any nation only four prominent persons replied in his favour . . . *and after this you would have us co-operate.*" This "outburst" of Dr. Guilday, calling for a separatist attitude, was of course quite un-American, and fortunately has found little favour with his co-religionists. But what *is* interesting to note is that even the Catholics who dissent, as most of course do, from such opinions, and who wholly disapprove of the public expression of them, are slow to make allowance for similar outbursts from disgruntled non-Catholic clergymen! If Catholics are alert to scent bigotry in those who belong to other creeds, why are they so slow to detect its presence in themselves?

Our Sunday Visitor, also called *The Harmoniser*, is one of the most energetic organs of the new enlightenment propaganda. It boasts of a circulation of 3,000,000, and is published at Huntington, Indiana. The Ed-

itor is Dr. Noll, Bishop of Fort Wayne, and Father R. E. Kelly is the Associate Editor.

In the issue of Nov. 4 (1928) His Lordship published an article under the caption—"A '*Who's Who*' *among the* '*Patriots.*' " This "Who's Who" comprised some seventy-four names accompanied by "remarks." The nature of the "remarks" will appear from the examples I give below. His Lordship did not hesitate to print in each case the name in full, an example which the present writer may be excused from following. In the list there are several senators; lawyers; Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian ministers; a Bishop, an Assistant Attorney-general, and many well-known and highly esteemed American citizens, together with ex-priests and ex-nuns real or so-called. The "Who's Who" *remarks* may be judged from the following examples:

M——, J. F. (Joe), ex-priest, anti-catholic lecturer now active in Texas. Developed drinking and drug-taking habits in Ireland (1911–1913). Deprived of faculties 1912, and was in home for inebriates, 1913. Came to America in 1915 or 1916, apostatised and joined the Presbyterian Church.[1]

Mrs. N. M——. Fake ex-Nun. Incorrigible girl in House of Good Shepherd, Detroit and Grand Rapids, Mich. Sentenced, on Jan. 15, 1927, to a fine of $100 or 30 days in jail for "disorderly conduct" at York, Pa., by the Mayor of York; and this sentence, on appeal, was upheld by the higher court.—Youngstown, (O.)

F——, J. W. "Supreme Grand Master" of the "Sons and Daughters of Washington," anti-Catholic organization, Al-

[1] The author believes he knew M—— when he was a much-liked athletic boy in a big Irish college. He wonders what Father M——'s mother would think of Bishop Noll were she to see his "Who's Who"?

bany, N. Y. Formerly prominent in the "Order of P's.," and collected thousands of dollars, ostensibly to advance that anti-Catholic cause, but, in reality, to enrich himself. Was denounced by the Provisional State Lodge of P's of the state of Illinois, in 1915, for failing to account for these funds, the Illinois lodge refusing to have further dealings of any kind with him. Has circulated a great deal of literature against Governor Smith.

D— L——, F. F., a Baptist minister. Anti-Catholic agitator for many years. Committed, on Dec. 15, 1904, to the State Hospital for the Insane, Lincoln, Nebr. His wife was granted a divorce in 1925. At the time of filing her petition at Ortonville, Mich., in July 1925, Mrs. D— L—— charged that her husband had bestowed undue attentions on a girl who was residing with them. D— L—— had, for some time, been travelling about with this girl and exhibiting her as an alleged "escaped nun."

There are a few remarks called for apropos of the "enlightenment" to be gained by non-Catholics as a result of the circulating of Bishop Noll's paper. First, although Catholic bishops have broadcast far and wide that "the Church does not mix in politics," the constant refrain in *Our Sunday Visitor's "Who's Who"* is that "*So and So opposed Governor Smith.*" Prominent Republicans, of unimpeachable character, are listed side by side with "execrables." Secondly, *Our Sunday Visitor* by imitating the methods of real bigots gives the utmost encouragement possible for the continuance of slander and the breeding of hate. Thirdly, it seems not a little unethical to republish unproven charges with the end in view of defamation. For example in one case, the "*Who's Who*" states that a certain "D. O'N. was arrested and held for questioning in con-

nection with the bombing of a Catholic Church at Marion, Ill."

Under the headline "'Anti-Catholic Publications," the *Fortnightly Review* [1] a responsible and widely circulated Catholic paper of St. Louis, Mo., discusses *The Fellowship Forum*, and the *Menace*. In so doing it remarks, rather invidiously as it seems, that "The F.F. now has two ex-priests on its staff." Continuing it states that the *Menace* sponsored "men and women who had actually been priests and nuns." "One of these," it adds, "was an ex-priest Fresenborg . . . *who is now living an old man in destitution in Texas.*" The *Fortnightly Review* acknowledges its debt to *Our Sunday Visitor* for this "interesting information" as it calls it.

One notes therefore how the good work of Bishop Noll is reinforced and how his enlightened conception of Catholic propaganda is taking! Even the cultured and scholarly Arthur Preuss, Editor of the *Fortnightly Review* is captivated by it! Yet, when one considers the spirit of this propaganda, how disgusting it seems!

An old, helpless, man, Fresenborg, dying in poverty in Texas! (As a Catholic I should call him *Father* Fresenborg, for is he not a priest *in æternum*, according to Catholic doctrine?) And his fellow-priests rejoice apparently over his misfortune and publish it to the world! Is this the way to enlighten non-Catholics as to the truth and beauty of Catholicism . . . to show "what the Church really is"? Two ex-priests in search of a living, educated men we suppose and *possibly* sincere fundamentally (else why were they ever ordained

[1] January 15, 1929.

Catholic priests?), find employment with the F.F. They are made the object of attack therefor. *Why do Catholics wish ex-priests to starve?* Why not show some signs of charity towards them? Why persecute them? And follow them with hatred? Christ had a kindly glance for Peter the first ex-priest, for had not Peter denied and deserted Christ? Why are there no kindly glances or words for ex-priests? A dozen Popes or more betrayed Christ notoriously since Peter's day but Catholics have the charity to try to make light of their misdeeds. What hypocrisy lies behind the anti-ex-priest propaganda of Bishop Noll! Frankly, would it not be better if there were many more ex-priests rather than fewer? (I address myself to Catholics who think and who know!)

I have as a Jesuit lived in houses where ex-ministers worked on Catholic periodicals, and I saw nothing incompatible with the honour of religion in employing men who had left the Protestant Church as defenders of Catholicism. They were apparently sincere in their new faith. I should be ashamed to find fault with Protestants for allowing men or women who abandon Catholicism for Protestantism to propagate their new-found religion so long as they give the ordinary signs of sincerity. And what right have Catholics to pretend that, for instance, the two ex-priests in the F.F. have not given the ordinary proofs of sincerity?

The Editor of the *Fortnightly Review* is intelligent enough to see that the propaganda of the F.F. and the *Menace* is more calculated to harm all religion than to injure Catholicism. But he is not wise enough to ap-

ply the same criticism to his own propaganda (and to that of Bishop Noll), and to see that it *also* is more likely to harm all religion than to hurt Protestantism.

Perhaps the most ambitious attempt at spreading the light about Catholicism, on the part of an individual Catholic in recent times, was the publication by Mr. Michael Williams of "Catholicism and the Modern Mind." Mr. Williams is the Editor of the Catholic weekly *The Commonweal* and the founder of the "Calvert Association" for the destruction of bigotry. On the cover-leaf of "Catholicism and the Modern Mind," the author is described as "one of the most influential 'lay' Catholics in America," and gets the credit of making the Catholic Church "articulate among us."

The book is a long one, a collection of articles written for *The Commonweal* and other papers and reviews. It discusses the interior spiritual life as well as the external activities of Catholics. It is confessedly propaganda "by an old journalist . . . one who knows what he is talking about." But like other publications of the new Catholic movement it is marred by much bitterness and make-believe. There is the old affectation that the Church welcomes sincere, honest criticism, yet there is a brutal assault made on the "Anonymous" priest who wrote the *Atlantic Monthly* articles which proffered sincere, honest criticism of the Church. "And still," writes Mr. Williams, "when a Catholic looks about him for a reasonable, calm, documented statement of the case against his Church, he fails to find it. *The only consideration of the subject that ordinarily is discernible is carried on below the surface of public discussion*

in obscure fanatical journals and pamphlets. At best they are only sources of irritation and rancour. At their worst they have frequently caused violent rioting." [1] If Mr. Williams finds such books as Winfred Ernest Garrison's "Catholicism and the American Mind," or Professor Guignebert's "Christianity," or Lord Acton's "Historical Lectures" "sources of irritation and rancour" he will be well advised to read *only* Catholic panegyrists.

Mr. Williams pays but a poor tribute to the culture and orthodoxy of his co-religionists. He affirms "that there have been few noteworthy Catholic writers, artists, scientists. The cultural level has been low." He sees improvement, however, setting in . . . and in its van *The Commonweal!* As for the orthodoxy of American Catholics, he makes the startling admission that "by far the greater number of American Catholics with whom I have discussed the Roman question, the problem of the 'temporal power,' are all firmly against the resumption of the Pope's acknowledged place as head of a State." [2]

Mr. Williams being more of a journalist than a theologian *overlooked* the obligation that lay upon him of securing an *imprimatur* for his book before publishing it, and furthermore he undoes much of the good effect of his devotional writing by teaching "pernicious heresies" such as that "the truth of the Catholic Church is 'unprovable' in any ordinary sense of that word." [3] What is *interesting* in Mr. Williams' propaganda is the revelation of his own multifarious activities on behalf

[1] P. 44.
[2] P. 82.
[3] P. 59.

of the Church with which he has associated himself for several years past.

There is one form of propaganda, unfortunate in some of its results, that the Catholic mind clings to. It is the drawing of public attention to the fact that this or that celebrity is a Catholic, or that he or she has had close and friendly relationship with the Church. Who has not heard, thanks to Catholic propaganda, that Mary Pickford, Gene Tunny, Babe Ruth, and a hundred such are Catholics. *The Register*, which calls itself the "Rapid-fire Catholic newspaper" (Jan. 6, 1929) in the midst of Church news and Apologetics, publishes a picture of Johnny Weissmuller, gives an account of his swimming, and ends abruptly with: "He is a Catholic!" That Mr. Hoover was the recipient of a present of a rosary-beads from Cardinal Mercier, that he was photographed in Poland by the side of the present Pope; that a daughter of the royal house of Japan had joined the Church; that a candle was burning at Lourdes for the recovery of George V of England; that General Foch said "O! Heaven" when a priest called during his illness; and such-like items are apparently considered helpful to the Catholic cause! At the back of such propaganda there seems to lurk an inferiority feeling, for it expresses an effort to make Catholicism appear interesting, and socially important.

On the other hand, when something that is untoward for the Church occurs, if it cannot be covered over, it is presented as an example of the rigour and discipline of the Church's organisation. A recent incident may help to illustrate this matter. In Rhode Island, a group

of French Catholics quarrelled with their bishop over the expenditure of some charitable funds, and entered suits in the Courts of law against Church Corporations, with a view to having the distribution of the funds accounted for. On Oct. 30, 1927, the Bishop of the diocese, Dr. Hickey through the Church organ *The Providence Visitor* excommunicated Elphege J. Daignault and sixty-three of his associates. The latter refused to submit and continued the action in the law Courts. They were exercising their rights as American citizens but in so doing they were acting against Canon Law, and hence their excommunication.

A short time ago the Catholic papers published humiliating forms of submission that the so-called "agitators" should sign with a view to having their excommunication removed. Still they refused to submit and now *the N.C.W.C. has released for publication* recent correspondence between the Apostolic Delegate at Washington, Most Rev. Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, and Dr. Hickey, relative to the Daignault group. *Unless they submit before next Easter, 1929, they will be placed under an interdict and forbidden to enter any church.* The correspondence is somewhat long, but it may be of interest to offer some of it for consideration. Coming as it does from the publicity department of the N.C.W.C. it takes its place quite naturally in the *movement for enlightenment.*

January 2, 1929.

Apostolic Delegation.
No. 1891-h

Your Lordship:

The Sacred Congregation of the Council, in Plenary Ses-

sion held November 17, 1928, subjected to thorough study and deliberation the deplorable situation brought about by the rebellious action of Mr. Elphege Daignault and those associated with him in the dioceses of New England and Quebec, considering particularly the developments in the situation since the condemnation of the journal "La Sentinelle" and the declaratory sentence of excommunication pronounced upon Mr. Daignault and his several associates. The conclusions reached by the Sacred Congregation were duly approved by His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, and it is at the express direction of the Sacred Congregation that I address this letter to Your Lordship.

It is well known to Your Lordship that Mr. Elphege Daignault of Providence, Rhode Island, and all those who actively abetted him in his deplorable action and agitation against the lawful ecclesiastical authority have been publicly declared excommunicated by the Holy See. Lest any of the faithful, through contact with Mr. Daignault or his associates, or through any document or publication which may emanate from these agitators, should be deceived or misled into sympathy for their wicked plan to destroy respect for and obedience to the lawful ecclesiastical authority, the Holy See directs that the fact of their excommunication be given the widest publicity. The faithful are also to know that the newspaper "La Sentinelle" has been condemned and prohibited by the Holy See; that "La Verité," which was substituted by the agitators, is also formally condemned and prohibited, and that this condemnation and prohibition are extended to any publication whatever which may be found to continue to defend the ideas or the erroneous principles propounded by the Sentinellist agitators. Moreover, if there should arise the question of establishing any other Catholic paper or periodical, the Bishop in whose diocese it is to be published must require that it be submitted to previous ecclesiastical inspection and approval.

In the interest of the faithful, Your Lordship will please

have this letter published in every Catholic publication circulating in your diocese.

With sentiments of deep esteem and devotion, I beg to remain

Yours sincerely in Christ,
(Signed) P. Fumasoni-Biondi, Abp. of Dioclea,
Apostolic Delegate.

1811 Biltmore Street,
Washington, D. C.
January 2, 1929.

Apostolic Delegation,
United States of America.
No. 1891-h

The Right Reverend William A. Hickey, D. D.,
30 Fenner Street,
Providence, R. I.

Your Lordship:

I beg to send you the enclosed letter addressed to Mr. Elphege Daignault and beg Your Lordship to have it delivered to Mr. Daignault.

By order of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, Your Lordship will also kindly notify Mr. Daignault and all his censured associates that if they shall have allowed themselves to remain one year under the censure of excommunication, without having sought absolution from this censure, they will become suspected of heresy, according to the prescriptions of Canon 2340 of Codex Juris Canonici, and subject to all the consequences thereof.

I shall be pleased to know from Your Lordship that these orders of the Sacred Congregation have been complied with.

With sentiments of deep esteem and devotion, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ,
(Signed) P. Fumasoni-Biondi, Abp. of Dioclea,
Apostolic Delegate.

1811 Biltmore Street,
Washington, D. C.,
January 2, 1929.

Apostolic Delegation,
United States of America.
No. 1891-h

Mr. Elphege Daignault.

DEAR SIR:

By order of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, dated November 30, 1928, I hereby admonish you that if, on or before the Feast of Easter, 1929, you shall not have repented of the act for which you have been declared excommunicated, you will be placed under the interdict prescribed in Canon 2291, 2, of the Codex Juris Canonici, by which you will be forbidden to enter any church until such time as a Sacred Congregation shall have relieved you of this interdict.

In conveying to you this warning of the Sacred Congregation, I beg of you to lose no time in restoring yourself to the peace and consolation which are to be found in humble submission to the lawful ecclesiastical authority.

Yours sincerely in Christ,
(Signed) P. FUMASONI-BIONDI, Abp. of Dioclea,
Apostolic Delegate.

In fulfilment of the instruction of the Sacred Congregation of the Council the Bishop sent the following to each of the signers who were excommunicated:

Providence, R. I., January 7, 1929.

Bishop's House,
30 Fenner Street.

DEAR SIR:

By order of the Sacred Congregation of the Council I hereby admonish you that if you allow yourself to remain one year under the censure of excommunication, that is, until May 17, 1929, without having sought absolution from this

censure, you will become suspected of heresy, according to the prescriptions of Canon 2340 of Codex Juris Canonici, and subject to all the consequences thereof.

Let me exhort you for the sake of your soul and of the souls that have come under the influence of this unfortunate agitation to put aside all human respect, and to submit humbly to the conditions laid down for your rehabilitation as an active member of the Church.

Sincerely yours in Xto.
(Signed) WILLIAM A. HICKEY,
Bishop of Providence.

The Daignault Case will strike the modern American mind as strange. Cynics will say, if a rich Catholic gives bounteously to the Church he is made a "Knight of St. Gregory," but if he insists upon knowing how his benefactions are disposed of he is made a "Companion of the Devil." Furthermore the introduction into America of punitive ecclesiastical methods, dictated and authorised by a Roman Congregation will most likely embarrass rather than hinder the propagandists who are proving that the Church in this country is in no way un-American.

No doubt in due time it will dawn upon the leaders of the present enlightenment campaign, that the best means of reconciling non-Catholic Americans to the idea of Catholicism is to tell them the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and to cease filling their ears with bemoanings and recriminations. Let Catholics cease to tabulate the activities of bigots and bogus nuns, and commence to tabulate the disreputable tactics of Catholic "reprisal" organisations; and the scandals of money-making shrines and bogus relics. So long as non-

Catholics feel that Catholics are insincere with them, denying this, pretending that, hiding something else, they will remain suspicious, and perhaps hostile.

"All the modern charges levelled against the Popes, priests, and nuns are but faint echoes," says Father Harney, S.J.[1] "of the far fiercer and much baser *calumnies* of the sixteenth-century ecclesiastical demagogues. . . . *The invectives of the Reformation propagandists make modern fulminations sound like the bleating of lambkins.*" This of course is true, very true. And it is also significant. *The "Reformers" of the sixteenth century were themselves priests and nuns and educated Catholic laymen;* they were still in the Church; they were speaking of what they saw and knew. They were testifying to facts as Pope Gregory VII, had done, and St. Peter Damien, and Catherine of Sienna, and a host of others who denounced vice and *misgovernment* in the Church. The Fellowship Forum, WHAP, Ku Klux, and *Menace* propagandists of the present day have not perhaps seen much at first hand, and their condemnations are pale. Also there is, thank God, less disorder to be seen nowadays in the Church than there was to be seen in the days of St. Damien or Blessed Thomas More. *But whatever there is to be seen should be denounced first of all by those who are eye-witnesses.* Catholics themselves should be the first to raise an outcry at corruption and misgovernment and should encourage one another to do so. When they observe trafficking and graft and simony and false piet-

[1] *America,* January 26, 1929. Father Harney in this article seeks to determine the *"fons et origo"* of bigotry.

ism they should drag it out in the open. Were non-Catholics sure that this was being done they would begin to be interested in the light on the bushel.

It must not be thought from the many severe things said above about Catholic propaganda that it always lacks sanity and that it is never enlivened by humour.

An admirable example of sanity on the part of the Catholic *Fortnightly Review* is to be found in its issue of Jan. 1, 1929. In the previous November, following the election, the Jesuit Journal *America* published a letter from an ecclesiastic of an amazing kind, in which *Alfred E. Smith and Jesus Christ were compared and likened!* The letter was so highly thought of by the Jesuits that it was afterwards reprinted. It came to be known as "The Brown Derby Letter." One passage was as follows: "You learned long ago in Sunday School the meaning of a little emblem we always carry close to our hearts. It is a crucifix and on it was transfixed another Happy Warrior who was welcomed by crowds in Galilee and Judea in His day. He had His Palm Sunday too. But when they balloted to see whether He should live or die all the votes were against Him." The *Fortnightly*, commenting upon what it called the "unmitigated asininity" of this letter, described it as "a deplorable sign of the decadence of the Catholic press."

The humorous side of the Catholic propaganda movement will be brought home to readers by the letter I publish herewith, though with names concealed. A wealthy Catholic circulates among Catholics his "cor-

respondence" which is usually exceedingly interesting. He places bishops as well as others on his mailing list. One of the latter apparently did not appreciate the devotion of this ardent propagandist, and hence the following letter:

Vicar-General's Office
. . . .Avenue
January 2, 1929.

Mr. A. B. C.
Louisville
Ky.

Dear Mr. C——

At the direction of His Lordship, Bishop X——, I am writing to request you not to send him your literature. This is the second request and he would be very pleased not to have the annoyance of casting the letters you insist on sending into the waste paper basket unread. You will confer a favour by following the suggestion.

Respectfully yours,
(Signed) T. J. D——
Secretary to the Bishop.

Our sincere but now less respectful propagandist thereupon copied and circulated the Bishop's letter, adding at the end of it: "*I sometimes wonder what the Marshalls and Chapmans, as well as other people, think of this 'Lordship' business.*"

CHAPTER XX

DREAM-WISHES OF REFORM

"Concealment is unworthy of those things which are divine and holy in religion, and in those things which are human and profane publicity has value as a check."—*Lord Acton*

"It is no new thing that there should be in the Church need of 'reform' and we have no hesitation in saying that one of the greatest calamities that ever befell the Church was the failure of the persistent efforts of 'reform in the head and members' in the beginning of the fifteenth century."—*Cardinal Gasquet* (*The Commonweal,* April 25, 1928)

We gather from Albert Dürer's woodcut and Holbein's painting of Desiderius Erasmus that he was sensitive, clear-visioned, and intellectually temperate. From his writings, and contemporary report, we have ample testimony to his exceeding great scholarship and his profound knowledge of his times. The great humanist had been ordained a priest, and although he did not devote his life to his sacred profession he remained to the last true to the Christian faith. He was profoundly interested in the problem of the reform of the Church (to which Cardinal Gasquet alludes in the quotation printed above) and he had the courage to score unmercifully the abuses which were rampant in his day. At first he sided wholeheartedly with Luther. A few months after Luther had posted up at Wittenberg (1517) his theses on "Indul-

gences" Erasmus sent a copy of Luther's manifesto to More and Colet in England.[1] In an accompanying letter to Colet he wrote: "In all royal Courts counterfeit theologians rule. The Roman Curia has simply cast aside all shame. What is more impudent than these incessant indulgences?" Erasmus made every effort to encourage and protect Luther, and later, when he began to fear that Luther was getting "out of hand" he tried to check his impetuosity. Luther's rejection of the sacramental system of the Church shocked Erasmus, but on the other hand Luther was shocked by Erasmus' liberalism with regard to dogma. While Luther was more than eager to interfere with cult, Erasmus was rather indifferent to mere matters of cult and was chiefly concerned about dogma.

Erasmus' ideal was "an undogmatic and ethical cult" founded alike on the Sermon on the Mount and Greek philosophy. Against "the stiffening of religion through dogma and organisation he asserted the claims of an inner personal piety." [2] His policy was to restrict the growing power of Rome. "Neither glory nor victory can be expected," he wrote, "unless we curb the tyranny of the Roman See and its satellites, the Dominicans, Carmelites, and Franciscans." In his letter to Spalatin (March 12, 1521) he said: "Should Luther go under, neither God nor man could longer endure the monks; nor can Luther perish without jeopardising a great part of the pure gospel truth." Nevertheless Erasmus was essentially moderate, and in favour of a *via media.* He would not abolish the Papacy but reform it. He

[1] "Erasmus," by Preserved Smith (Harper, 1923), p. 215.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 433.

would not abolish the Mass but restore it to its primitive form, having communion in both kinds. He would not even do away with devotions but purify them . . . for "on account of the danger of changing old customs they should be tolerated." His spirit was mild, accommodating, temperate, and it was only the unrestrained violence of Luther that made him despair of achieving reform. "The Catholic Church," wrote Karl Pearson,[1] "needed reform urgently enough, but the reform that it needed was the reform of Erasmus not of Luther. Had the labours of Erasmus not been blighted by the passionate appeals of Wittenberg . . . at first to the ignorance of the masses, and then to the greed of the Princes, we believe that the Catholic Church might have developed with the intellectual development of mankind, might possibly have become the universal instrument of moral progress and mental culture, and . . . dogmas gradually slipping into forgetfulness . . . we should now be enjoying the blessings of a universal Church embracing all that is best in the intellect of our time."

Erasmus' *gravamen* against the Church, was not only the existence of much corruption, much superstition, and a great departure from the primitive faith, but chiefly that the cult of the spirit had been lost sight of. Erasmus regarded the philosophy of the Greeks as "a natural religion," and he found in the ethics and philosophy of Christ its divine culmination. For Erasmus the worship of Christ lay in assimilating His philosophy and in imitating Him, not in giving verbal assent to a creed, or in submitting to the exploitation

[1] "Erasmus," p. 52.

of sacramental grace. The Gospels seemed to Erasmus to teach that *religion was a way of life rather than a creed,* or a set of rules and ceremonies. "External worship is not condemned," he wrote in his *Enchiridion,* "but God is pleased only by the inward spirit of the worshipper." For Erasmus "fasting, sacerdotal celibacy, and the Communion in one kind and all the rest of Church law, did no harm if *stress were not put upon such matters.*" [1]

He was before all else, a champion of "the philosophy of Christ," and this he understood as simple, rational Christianity, founded upon the scientific study of the oldest Christian manuscripts.

As a reformer Erasmus failed, partly through his idealism, in that he counted on the abolition of abuses by those whose interests such abuses served; partly was his failure due to over-caution and an excessive anxiety about his personal safety and well-being. Frankly, in one of his letters, he admitted that he was not the stuff of which heroes are made. The chief result of his work for reform is to be found in the inspiration it subsequently afforded to the twentieth-century Modernists, who might well be called the "humanists of religion."

"Modernists" was the term applied by Pius X in his Encyclical, "*Pascendi Gregis,*" to the group of Catholic priests and scholars, Loisy, Tyrrell, Murri, Fogazzaro, Sabatier, and others, who set to work, at the beginning of the present century, *to reinterpret Catholicism in terms of modern thought.* The movement which they

[1] "Erasmus," p. 54.

initiated was, to outward appearance, crushed by the vigorous action of Pius X, but there is not a little evidence today that it was not crushed at all but merely forced under the surface for the time being.

"Modernism" as a heresy was in many respects unique. Its leaders were men of culture, virtue, and devotedly attached to the Church. Even Pius X, who was presently to describe them as the "most pernicious of all the enemies of the Church," admitted that "they lead a life of the greatest activity, of assiduous and ardent application to every branch of learning, and possess as a rule a reputation for irreproachable morality." They were in many respects more Catholic than the Orthodox Catholics themselves, "because for them religious thought was not a part or a detail of their lives; it was at once its atmosphere and its soul" (Sabatier). They steeped themselves in the traditions of the Church, and studied as none before had studied the living spirit of the Church, the vital idea of the Church, and Cardinal Newman's "development of Christian doctrine."

"The increase and expansion of the Christian creed and ritual," Newman had written, "and the variations which have attended the process in the case of the individual writers and Churches, are the necessary attendants on any philosophy or polity which takes possession of the intellect and heart, and has had any wide and extended dominion. . . . *From the nature of the human mind time is necessary for the full comprehension and perfection of great ideas.* . . . This is what may be called the "Theory of the Development of Doctrine.' In the growth of the *mustard seed* . . . the

spontaneous as well as gradual character of the growth is intimated . . (it is not an effect of wishing and resolving, or of forced enthusiasm or of any mechanism of reasoning or of any mere subtlety of the intellect; *but comes of its own innate power of expansion within the mind in its season.*"

The Modernists pushed forward this doctrine of Newman. There had been "increase and expansion" of Catholic doctrine, with "variations" here and there. The great ideas of Catholicism needing as they did time for their "full comprehension and perfection" had not been fully or clearly expressed in the dogmas, formulated in the far back past. They were still growing, not thanks to conscious reasoning, but to their "own innate power of expansion within the minds" of Catholics. This Newman-doctrine "organic growth in the Church," with all that follows from it, is the basic idea of Modernism. When applied to authority, to the interpretation of Scripture, to the meaning of dogmas, it led to the expression of thoughts which were most horrifying to the ears of Ecclesiastical Governors. But the parable of the "mustard seed" had come down from Christ Himself, and if it did not mean that the Church grew as an organism grows, what did it mean?

The Modernist movement appeared rather suddenly, but not unexpectedly, for the progress of thought in religious matters, both inside and outside the Church, rendered it inevitable. The views of the leading Modernists were expressed more or less tentatively. Pius X was afterwards to accuse them of adopting a pose and employing a subterfuge in this matter. "It is," he wrote ("*Pascendi Gregis*"), "one of the cleverest devices of

the Modernists to present their doctrines in a scattered and disjointed manner, so as to make it appear as if their minds were in doubt or hesitation, whereas in reality they were quite fixed and steadfast." On the other hand we have Sabatier [1] saying; "Modernism is not a philosophy, but none the less there is a Modernist philosophy which consists in studying the facts of religion by the method of observation. . . . The Modernist Catholic destroys nothing, gives up nothing; he accepts everything and makes it live. . . . At the bottom of Modernism there is not a more or less studied plan to get rid of excrescences, such as there has been in all previous attempts at reform—but *an effort to arrive at an idea of the Church which shall be closer to life and truer in practice*. . . . Modernism is not a fixed, unalterable, intellectual synthesis; it is a reconciler, friendly alike with science and faith; a messenger of peace." Perhaps the saying from Lacordaire best expressed the spirit of Modernism: "I care not to convince my opponents of error, I aspire to be united with them in a higher truth."

The movement was composed largely of priests, both secular and religious, and it embraced many sympathisers among thoughtful Catholic laymen. This fact gave it the appearance of a revolt against authority, a revolt that was "rebellious" and treasonable in character, although among the leaders nothing was farther from their minds than the raising of a standard of revolt. Theirs was a dream of a purer Catholicism—a Catholicism no longer "stiffened by dogma and organisation" (Erasmus).

[1] "Modernism," p. 146 seq.

The Modernist "reform-platform" was thus coldly and cynially summarised by Pius X in his encyclical "*Pascendi Gregis*":

"It remains for us now to say a few words about the Modernist as reformer. . . . They wish philosophy to be reformed especially in the ecclesiastical seminaries. They wish the scholastic philosophy to be relegated to the history of philosophy, and to be classed among obsolete systems, and the young men to be taught modern philosophy which alone is true and suited to the times in which we live. They desire the reform of theology; rational theology is to have modern philosophy for its foundation, and positive theology is to be founded on the history of dogma. . . . Dogmas and their evolution, they affirm, are to be harmonised with science and history. In the catechism no dogmas are to be inserted except those that have been reformed and are within the capacity of the people. Regarding worship they say, the number of external devotions is to be reduced, and steps must be taken to prevent their further increase, though indeed, some of the admirers of symbolism are disposed to be more indulgent on this head. They cry out that ecclesiastical government requires to be reformed in all its branches, but especially in its disciplinary and dogmatic departments. They insist that both outwardly and inwardly it must be brought into harmony with the modern conscience, which now wholly tends towards democracy; a share in ecclesiastical government should therefore be given to the lower ranks of the clergy, and even to the laity, and authority which is too much concentrated should be decentralised. The Roman Congregations, and especially the *Index* and the *Holy Office* should be likewise modified. . . . They ask that the clergy should return to their primitive humility and poverty, . . . and there are some who, gladly listening to the teaching of their Protestant masters, would desire the suppression of the celibacy of the clergy."

Pius X, having thus summarised the reforms tentatively proposed by the Modernists, exclaims: "*What*

is there left in the Church which is not to be reformed by them and according to their principles?" Nevertheless, few of the suggested reforms deserve to be regarded as extreme, and the platform as a whole does not display what Pius X called "a great and eager passion for innovation."

The need of modification of the Roman Congregations and of the "disciplinary and dogmatic departments of the Church's government" is pretty well admitted by all. That the "number of external devotions" should be reduced is an obvious necessity. That "the lower clergy and the laity" should have a share in Church government, means merely a return to older practices of the Church, as indeed does the abolition (or modification) of the celibacy of the clergy. The only really serious change demanded is the "reform of dogma" . . . how that is to be done it is difficult to say! There is no admission of any kind on the part of Pius X that any one of these reforms is required or desirable, but Pius was not a reforming Pope. His whole policy was to enforce existing discipline and to change nothing. His heart-cry was that sentence which appears towards the end of the Encyclical: "FAR, FAR FROM THE CLERGY BE THE LOVE OF NOVELTY."

There are, needless to say, innumerable difficulties in the way of reform. There is first of all the difficulty of bringing home to the minds of the faithful the necessity and possibility of reform, and their duty of co-operating in its realisation. There is the difficulty of overcoming the opposition of those who are interested in the continuance of the *status quo* of the Church.

There is the immense unwieldiness and inertia of the Church and the absence of any machinery for reform save the "Ecumenical Council" the summoning of which is dependent upon the Pope, and involves endless intrigue. Besides reform is an expensive luxury and can only be effected at very great cost. But as against such and many other kinds of difficulties there is the possibility of arousing the invincible dynamic of organised public opinion . . . and the hope that God may send a prophet to lead the movement!

The first step in the direction of reform must be taken by those who dream of a purer, truer, and more intellectually satisfying Catholicism. They must disembarrass themselves of all fear and write and speak openly and boldly. They must realise their right to the freedom of the Children of God; their right to work out their own happiness and salvation *in the Church.* They must not allow themselves to be terrorised by the loud cries of angry Shepherds;[1] nor to be driven from the fold of Christ by theological syllogisms. Things have come to a very serious pass in the Church; the bark of Peter is on the rocks; the period of "red-tape-ism" is long past; if action is not taken without delay the cry "*Sauve qui peut*" will be raised.

When it comes to the question of initiating reform, a

[1] Recently a painful example of this kind of reaction on the part of a local shepherd, the Bishop of North Dakota was given in the Press. An "Anonymous" priest had published articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* which discussed critically Church affairs. The Bishop of North Dakota, Dr. Vincent Wehrle thereupon wrote as follows to the *Atlantic Monthly.* "Since when has the forum of the *'Atlantic Monthly'* become the proper place where religious questions are to be debated and perhaps decided? Our Catholic Church has her dio-

method which would harmonise well with Catholic tradition, and cause the least possible derangement to the constitution of the Church, would be the employment of the "national council" for the purpose. The national council was well known in the early Church. It differed little from the plenary council, or synod. "When the hierarchs of all the provinces of a nation assemble, the synod is called national or under certain circumstances plenary." [1] In the sixth century, and later, the national council was much employed in the Church and enjoyed very great power. Besides it was not unusual for kings and nobles to attend such councils. There were at times "mixed-synods" "at which both civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries met to settle secular *as well as ecclesiastical affairs* . . . (and) . . . In England even *abbesses were occasionally present* at mixed-synods." [2] Sometimes but not always the clergy and laity voted in separate chambers. As it is important to our purpose to emphasise the fact that at "national councils" there was lay representation, and that as a consequence it is

cesan synods, her provincial councils, and most of all has the Holy See, that is, the Pope with his counsellors to discuss and decide matters of religion. But to cause discussion on matters of our Holy Catholic Church even if they were only on 'policies and methods' in the 'Atlantic Monthly' is about as wise and appropriate as having such debates in an old-fashioned saloon, the debaters fortified by jugs of beer or something stronger. . . . They (the enemies of the Catholic Church) are pleased that a Catholic priest goes openly before the public not as a faithful son of the Church but as her opponent."

It is in the last clause of this remarkable outburst that the poison lies. There are, as time will prove, innumerable ecclesiastics who though knowing well that reform is needed will put every obstacle in the way of reform through fear lest "enemies of the Church" should think that there are things amiss in the Church. And needless to say every reformer, however sincere, will be dubbed by such ecclesiastics "opponents" of Catholicism and "unfaithful sons."

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. XIV, p. 388.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 424.

perfectly in accord with Catholic tradition to have "mixed-synods" it may be worth while to add one more quotation on the matter from Catholic sources;[1] "Most of the Frankish councils held under the Merovingians and Carlovingians assembled the episcopate of one, sometimes of several kingdoms. The king often assisted thereat and the conciliar decisions bearing on discipline were the subject of royal ordinances and capitulars. *These double assemblies of bishops and comites* (*counts*) *were the usual method in the Frankish kingdoms* and Thomassin rightly regards them as the historical origin of parliaments." The plenary councils which have up to the present been held in America, namely the three Baltimore councils of 1852, 1866, and 1884, were the modern "ecclesiastical" councils, and as such inherently unfitted to undertake serious reforms.

A truly "national" council, following the precedent of those of the early Church, but still more democratic, should therefore be set up, in this country. The council should comprise the bishops and an equal number of laymen and minor clergy, the latter chosen by ballot in each diocese. The National Council of Catholic Men, and the N.C.W.C., and the Catholic Women's Councils could very well co-operate, lending their permanent staffs and supplying the necessary funds.

The meetings of the council should of course be open to the press and decisions should be taken by ballot. The proceedings should be conducted on democratic principles; privilege and prescription should be in abeyance. The first actual reforms effected by the

[1] Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. XIV, p. 389.

council should naturally have to do with such matters as fall under episcopal jurisdiction liberally understood. An end should be put to all of the miserable trafficking in religious objects and practices that brings so much shame on Catholicism. Many elements of that modern "materialisation" of religion that has been creeping into the American Church could likewise be gotten rid of. Episcopal regulations should be revised and such as are *coercive* in any way rescinded. A *modus operandi* whereby the laity would have a share in the administration of every parish and diocese should be set up, and a system established giving to parishioners a right to vote upon the continuance of their pastors in office. A fair system of taxation for spiritual services should be decided upon, and a thorough annual auditing of parish and diocesan accounts arranged for.

The next step of the national council should be to set in order its relationship with the Holy See. It should formulate with firmness and moderation its requirements. It should, for instance, demand of Rome due representation in the Curia; the withdrawal of encyclicals unsuited to the requirements of the American Church; the abrogation (should the council so will) of the law of celibacy; and removal of all the spiritual penalties and menaces attached to the general laws of the Church. Should the council decide that it would be better for the cause of Catholicism in this country to have the Mass and services in the vernacular it should also demand of Rome such a modification of Canon law. The council should, since America is a non-Catholic country, insist on the withdrawal of the "*Ne Temere*"

decree, and the recognition of civil marriages as licit and valid for Catholics.

The national council should head towards the establishment of a national Church, united by sentiment and tradition to Rome; a National Church still recognising the Supremacy of the Roman Pontiff, but so far independent as to be able to resist the introduction of new dogmas. Lastly the national council should insist on the re-establishment of the early democratic custom of electing bishops.

It will be remembered that in their suggested reforms both Erasmus and the Modernists were in favour of the "re-interpretation" of dogma. This, of course, is the crux of reform in the Catholic Church. No one of the changes that I have so far suggested is outside the scope of the Church's power to effect, but when it comes to the changing of dogma, the majority of theologians and canonists would be forced to say, "it can't be done"! There have been ardent reformers in the Church who did not aspire to the changing of dogma. Such a one was the saintly Cardinal Prince-bishop of Diepenbrock about whom Lord Acton has written. Diepenbrock believed that "*a complete renovation of the Church* was dawning on the vision of all who thought without prejudice" but he contented himself with aiming at a "softening of the sharp distinction between the clergy and the laity; a co-operation of the people in Church government; and a transformation of the Roman Court." Very wisely he recognised that if there were more democracy in the constitution of the Church, there would still be good hope for her ultimate puri-

fication. And it seems to the present writer, that even if the one point were gained, namely that the people could once more elect their bishops, the Church would in the end rise like a Phœnix from her ashes.[1]

The national council should meanwhile work steadily for the re-union of all Christian creeds. It should welcome all Christians to be present and to speak at its sessions. It should find a way to assimilate the Old Catholic and the American Catholic parties. It should decide in favour of the validity of Anglican Orders, and invite Rome to re-open for herself that question in a fairer and more generous spirit. With the recognition of the validity of Anglican Orders the co-operation and re-union of the Catholic and Anglican Churches should not be long delayed. "One fold and one Shepherd" should be the final aim of the new movement.

Twenty years have passed since Pius X in his Encyclical "*Pascendi Gregis*" struck ruthlessly at sincere Catholic scholars who were striving to bring the Church into harmony with modern life by revitalising her doctrines and humanising ecclesiastical authority. Pius X believed that he was saving the Church by his effort to stem the tide of modern thought among the faithful. But, as was inevitable, he failed. No tide can be turned

1 Perhaps in the end the solution of the baffling problem of *dogma* will be found in the formulation and declaration of a final dogma to the effect that as the Church grows, in body and mind, she must for ever be busy reclothing her body and mind, the former in newer, whiter garments, the latter in truer, simpler language, that she must step by step rid herself of worn-out customs, doctrines, and dogmas. But will such a dogma ever be accepted by the infallible *magisterium* of Rome? And if it is not accepted—what then?

back nor can it be for long delayed. In America it is working strong and fast among the people, disguised under the mask of idealised "Americanism." "Americanism," says the one thoughtful Catholic review of this country, "is slowly destroying the vitality of the Catholic faith in the midst of seeming prosperity!" [1] But is there not a question of evolution rather than of destruction? And is there not something of good, of hope, of promise in this God-sent evolution?

As I write this last page of "While Peter Sleeps" the press announces (Feb. 3, 1929) that Pope Pius XI proposes to call together an "Ecumenical Council" for the year 1930. To that Council will go the Catholic hierarchy from all over the world, and from among us one hundred bishops. What part will the latter take in the Council? Will they be content to record their *placets* for the Mussolini-Pius territorial and pecuniary settlement, and for a new dogma, which will no doubt be announced, declaring that the body of the Blessed Virgin was carried to heaven on angels' wings soon after her interment? A dogma which is bereft of a scintilla of historical foundation and rests only on pious legend.

Will the hundred Catholic bishops carry to Rome a strong demand for drastic reform? A demand expressing the will of the great National Catholic Council of America the desirability of which I have discussed in

[1] *The Fortnightly Review*, Jan. 1, 1929. "The 'Americanism' condemned by Leo XIII is by means exterminated, and if Modernism never found many theoretical advocates in this country, it was solely because we [Catholics] were too ignorant to understand what it was about. In practice we have had and still have plenty of it and no honest observer will maintain the situation is at all promising."

the foregoing pages? Will America enter Rome resolved to demonstrate that in things religious as well as in things political the New World is needed to save the Old? The Catholic bishops of America have it in their power to make of Pius' council a religious Locarno, and to set in motion a great movement destined to achieve the dream of every sincere lover of Christ, namely the re-union of all Christendom. Rome was responsible for the disruption of Christianity; Rome must now be strongly urged to make amends to all the world and undo her ill-omened work. American Catholicism is in the position to use persuasion, while holding threats in reserve. On the Catholic bishop-delegates there rests a grave responsibility. Never again may such an opportunity of doing great good present itself; never again may the path of duty and wisdom shine so clear. In the heart of Rome let Catholic America declare war on religious war, and fill the ancient dome of St. Peter's with the cry: "*Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*" (Eph. 5: 14).

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